BUSINESS / B1
RP to shell out $1.3B to rein in rice prices

BUSINESS / B3
Petron gets first petrochemical customer

ACROSS / A14
Diwalwal folk on alert against entry of ZTE

ACROSS / A15
Slaughter of sharks in Batangas Bay raises alarm

Esperon: Pardon possible for 9 Army officers

By Nikko Dizon

A PRESIDENTIAL PARDON IS NOT FAR-fetched for the nine junior Army officers convicted of committing a coup d'état during the July 2003 "Oakwood mutiny," Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr. said yesterday.

"It is in the realm of possibilities," Esperon said in a phone interview when asked if the nine officers led by Captain Gerardo Gambala and Mlt Maestrecampo could be pardoned by

(TURN TO A2)

PHILIPPINE DAILY
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BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

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Junket time: Solons flying to South Africa

By TJ Burgonio and Norman Bordadora

A LARGE GROUP OF LAWMAKERS IS FLYING to Cape Town in South Africa this week to attend the 118th Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) general assembly.

Senate President Manuel Villar Jr. leads the chamber's contingent of nine, while fo-

(TURN TO A2)

Hanjin denies pullout threat

By Tonette Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Hanjin Heavy Industries & Construction Phil. Inc. yesterday denied that it had threatened to pull out multibillion-dollar shipbuilding projects following claims its staff quarters sitting in a forested area violated the environment.

"Hanjin is a decent company and we never threaten anybody," Hanjin president Jeong Sup Shim told the Inquirer.

Asked to comment on a report of Lloyd's List Online, an international maritime portal, Shim sent this text message: "We never threatened to pull out investment."

Lloyd's List's April 8 report said: "If it gets any worse, [Hanjin] may be forced to review its investment program in the country."

The report quoted Shim as saying that "Hanjin's investment in the Philippines is one of

(TURN TO A4)

2 Pinoys fined in HK for taking plane's life vests

By Philip C. Tabeza
Correspondent

HONG KONG—THEY TWICE almost taking "souvenirs" from airplanes, reportedly on international flights.

A judge here yesterday fined two Filipinos HK$2,000 (P18,700) each for taking with them life jackets from their Cathay Pacific flight from Dubai.

Tsuen Wan Principal Magistrate Andrew Ma imposed the fines on Edwin S. Antolin, 32, and Crisostomo R. Ramos, 29, al-

(TURN TO A6)

NFA plans to raise selling price of rice

A WORLD War II veteran shields his head from the soaring sun with a styrofoam container during the 66th commemoration of the Araw ng Kagitingan in Pilar, Bataan.

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo honors war heroes during Wednesday's wreath-laying ceremonies on the occasion of Araw ng Kagitingan held at the Mt. Samat Shrine in Pilar, Bataan, where she signed a new veterans law. (See story on Page A8.) Beside her is US Ambassador Kristie Kenney.

But agency declines to disclose timetable

THE NATIONAL FOOD Authority is considering raising the price of government-subsidized rice to help increase the income of rice farmers and reduce its huge losses.

"We can't keep prices too low because our farmers might be affected," NFA Administrator Jesus Navarro yesterday said at a news conference.

The NFA currently sells its subsidized rice at P18.25 a kilo, while commercial rice is retailed at more than P30 in public markets and grocery stores.

Navarro said the retail price of the subsidized rice should ideally be twice the price of palay (unhusked rice), which it buys at P17 a kilo.

He said the proposed to increase prices was brought about by heavy losses incurred by the NFA. The state-run agency's losses have amounted to about P45 billion since 2003.

"It is something that we are evaluating," the NFA chief said of the price increase. He declined to give a timetable for the implementation of the increase.

Poor Filipinos are already queuing for hours to buy subsidized rice to feed their families and raising its price would be a controversial move amid climbing costs for other basic commodities.

The prices of rice have hit record levels on the international market amid tight global supplies.

At the Lucena City public market, a variety of commercial rice is now sold at more than P40 a kilo. A kilo of "chinorato," which was being sold at P35 per

NFA PLANS A8

US ready to supply rice to RP, says Kenney

By Michael Lim Ubac

PILAR, BATAAN—THE UNITED States is ready to supply rice to the Philippines anytime, US Ambassador Kristie Kenney said yesterday.

"Yes, you can count on us," a beaming Kenney told reporters before the start of ceremonies marking the 66th anniversary of the Araw ng Kagitingan here in Mt. Samat.

Kenney said the United States was always willing to help an allied country.

"Rice is an important issue in the Philippines and I had the great fortune to meet Philippine rice farmers to see how talented they are and how dedicated. There are a lot of things the United States is willing to help. First of all, we will always make our supply available if the Philippines needs rice," Kenney said.

In her speech, President Macapagal-Arroyo took a swipe at her critics for apparently indulging in too much politics instead of helping her ensure "food on the table for our people."

Ms Arroyo insisted that her administration was trying to "prevent any type of food crisis."

"It is essential for our politi-

(TURN TO A8)

Panganiban tells SC: Reverse Neri ruling

By Michelle V. Rosa

FORMER CHIEF JUSTICE Artemio Panganiban yesterday called on the Supreme Court to reverse its decision on executive privilege, saying that the Constitution upholds transparency and accountability.

Panganiban spoke to reporters on the sidelines of a World Bank-sponsored conference a day after the Senate filed a motion for reconsideration of the tribunal's March 25 ruling upholding former Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri's refusal to disclose in a Senate inquiry last September conversations he had with President Macapagal-Arroyo on an alleged bribery attempt.

"There were three specific questions that the court said Neri need not answer. With all due respect to my former colleagues in the Supreme Court, they should reconsider their decision," Panganiban said.

"The Constitution primarily upholds transparency and accountability. This is the rule. Any exception to the rule must be proven and recovery is an exception," he added.

PANGANIBAN A4

Belmonte confirms plans on VMMC: Hospital in, golf course out

FIRST, the good news for veterans: Their hospital will remain in Quezon City. And the bad news for golfers: The fairways will become residential areas.

By TJ Burgonio

THE GRIZZLED MILITARY VETERANS got a little emotional as word spread that the Quezon City government plans to turn the Veterans Memorial Medical Center compound into an upscale residential area.

"It makes us sad because this is the only hospital where we get free treatment," a 54-year-old retired Air Force lieutenant on Monday said as he awaited his turn at the state-run hospital's dialysis center.

"Where else could we turn to if this is demolished, especially now when prices are going up and we only get a measly pension?" said the surgeon,

BELMONTE A5

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Luzon (Batanes): Mostly sunny skies with scattered thunderstorms and rain showers while the rest of the country will have partly cloudy to overcast skies with isolated thunderstorms or localized rains.

Metro Manila	24-34 / 75-93	Kalibo/Boracay	24-34 / 75-93
Baguio	17-26 / 63-79	Davao	24-34 / 75-93
Tuguegarao	24-34 / 75-93	Cebu	24-34 / 75-93
Laoag	24-34 / 75-93	Iloilo/Bacolod	24-34 / 75-93
Clark/Subic	24-34 / 75-93	Cotabato	24-34 / 75-93
Legazpi	24-34 / 75-93	Zamboanga	24-34 / 75-93
Virac	24-34 / 75-93	Tuguegarao (Batanes)	18-24 / 64-75

Second FRONTPAGE

EZ2 FOUR DIGIT: 15 5 — 4 2 7 6
SUERTRES: 6 4 1 — 3 1 4 — 1 7 6
MEGALOTTO 6/45: 1 6 18 21 32 34
P5,066,908.20

Cops raid Laguna terror lair

But al-Qaida man escapes

By Nikko Dizon

POLICE RAIDED A SUSPECTED AL-QAIDA TERRORIST lair in Alaminos, Laguna Tuesday night and recovered explosive materials believed to have been earmarked for bomb attacks on foreign embassies in Manila, authorities said yesterday.

But the owner of the cobbled Al-Imam Compound, identified as **Khalid Pagayao**, reportedly slipped away.

In a press conference in Camp Crame, Chief Supt. Raul Castañeda of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) said operatives seized 550 improvised blasting caps, 25 cutting fuses, two detonation cords and an undetermined amount of saltpeter, a component of explosives.

Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) Secretary Ronaldo Puno, who was also at the press conference, said a search warrant for Pagayao's residence was issued by Imus, Cavite Judge Oscar Mangrobang.

"We are not in Libya to tell you, all the charges being cooked-up ones. But the PNP is busy ensuring the safety of everyone in Metro Manila," the secretary said.

No fabrications

Puno said the operation was aimed clear police being one-hundred-percent sure that the alleged plot to bomb embassies and sensitive President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"Before when we were talking about this, no one believed us. People were skeptical. But we are showing you that the Philippine National Police is on top of situation," he said.

Ephdez, PNP Chief Avelino Razon said they discovered the plot to bomb foreign embassies and assassinate the President last February. The plot was detailed in a document written in Arabic which was found in a parking lot.

Several foreigners and Filipinos were arrested in connection with the supposed plot.

Castañeda also said they are investigating the link of Pagayao to the foreign terror suspects.

'We're not alone'

Two of the foreigners arrested, Jordanians Khaled Hasan Al-Mili and Walid Abu Atoum, will be deported.

Razon stressed that the two Jordanians were not being set free. "They will face other charges in Jordan and maybe other countries as well," he said.

"We were not alone (in operating against the two). We had foreign counterparts helping us. Now that they have been deported, the effort has shifted to our foreign counterparts," Razon said.

But for now, Razon declined to reveal any more details, citing "operational requirements."

"The investigation is still ongoing from our end. We have not closed the case," he added.

The case is "an international operation involving persons outside the country as well," Puno added.

"So they are being deported back to their place of origin and from there, the international character of the conspiracy can be determined and the proper charges can be filed in the correct venue," Puno said.

He said other governments would be helping each other in prosecuting the two Jordanians as part of a global effort to fight terrorism.

Terror cell

Al-Mili and Abu Atoum were arrested in February on suspicion that they were part of an al-Qaida terrorist cell out to bomb the US, British and Australian embassies in the country. Authorities also said that they were part of a plan to assassinate the President.

Recurring, the two were scheduled to be sent back to Jordan through a connecting flight from Bangkok.

"Anything which has to do with terrorists, particularly the al-Qaida, is an international problem that is normally dealt with by a number of countries on a bilateral basis," Puno said.

He explained that if cases were to be filed against them in the Philippines, "they would have been limited to the offenses they committed here."

TERROR ACT: Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno and PNP Chief Avelino Razon examine the bomb-making components seized by police at a suspected terrorist hideout in Laguna. (Alex Acosta)

Vietnam building new structure in Spratlys

By Tarra Quismundo and Norman Bordadora

THE PHILIPPINE AIR FORCE YESTERDAY reported that one of its planes had sighted a new structure in a Vietnam-claimed island in the disputed Spratly chain.

Lt. Col. Jose Tony Villasenor, commander of the Palawan-based 530th Composite Tactical Wing, said a March 19 PAF reconnaissance flight over the disputed islands showed new construction on Pugad Island, one of 21 islands being claimed by Vietnam.

"It is new but it is not military ... It is architecture. It looks like a residential building, or for whatever civilian use. That island is occupied by fishermen," Villasenor said yesterday at the start of a PNP briefing on the Spratlys.

Villasenor said the island is some 40 nautical miles northwest of Pag-asa island, one of the nine Spratly islands claimed by the Philippines, which is now a municipality of Palawan province.

No violation

PAF officials said the new construction was not in violation of any agreement as Pugad Island is already occupied by Vietnam.

"I don't see anything alarming there," he said. The new construction was nowhere like the controversial military settlement that China built on Mischief Reef in 1995, he said.

China's occupation of Mischief Reef, which is part of the Philippine-claimed Kalayaan island group, created a diplomatic uproar among claimants to the resource-rich Spratly chain which is being claimed in whole or part by China, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei, Taiwan and Philippines.

It prompted the parties to draw up a code of conduct that banned any new occupation of the disputed islands and allowed navigation and overflights for all claimant countries.

Baselines compromised

Meanwhile, Cebu City Rep. Antonio Cuenco, chair of the House committee on foreign affairs, said he has thought of a way to solve the executive-legislative impasse over House Bill 3216, the measure seeking to define the country's archipelagic baselines.

Cuenco said Congress could adopt a law that will only enclose within its archipelagic baselines those islands in the Kalayaan group that are actually occupied by the Philippines.

Cuenco said this may be an option that the executive branch and Congress might want to consider in the midst of the disagreements between the two branches of the House on how the baselines bill should be enacted.

"We will include in our baselines only several nine islands that are occupied by Filipino communities.

And of course, Scarborough Shoal because it is quite near [our main archipelago]," Cuenco said.

The House has passed on second reading HB 3216 that proposes baselines that enclose the entire Philippine archipelagos and extends to the west to include as well Do Kalayaan group and Scarborough Shoal off Zambales.

The baselines bill now pending in the Senate is substantially the same as the House version.

Malacañang has asked the House to reconsider passing the HB 3216, citing the position of the Commission on Maritime and Ocean Affairs that the Philippines might have to go to court to assert its sovereignty or sovereignty over territory within the baselines when some of the islands are already occupied by China, Vietnam and other claimants.

Dengue cases rising anew

By Margaux C. Ortiz

CASES OF THE DREADED DENGUE FEVER are now on the rise, and government officials are pointing to climate change as one of the major factors behind the alarming phenomenon.

Health Secretary Francisco Duque III yesterday announced that the number of dengue cases has significantly increased in the first two months of the year compared to the same period in 2007.

In a press conference highlighting the role of climate change in the general health of Filipinos, Duque said the DOH recorded 8,845 dengue cases from January to March 15 this year compared to the previous record of 5,409 cases.

"This is only a telltale sign that dengue fever is again on the upsurge," Duque said.

The health secretary cited the impact of climate change on the health of Filipinos, saying that fluctuations in climate variables such as temperature, humidity and precipitation could lead to the outbreak of climate-related diseases such as dengue fever, cholera and typhoid fever.

A study by the DOH's National Epidemiology Center (DOH-NEC) presented during the press briefing showed that there has been a seasonal trend in the country during the last half century.

Duque said the seasonal trend peaked to 1998 during the El Niño year.

The DOH-NEC study further revealed that dengue cases in the country reached a record of 46,000 in 1998.

Climate variables have pointed to the effect of higher temperatures on the dengue virus by shortening its incubation period.

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APOLOGY FOR SEX SLAVES

Gabriela solon laments return of 'Reso' 124

By Norman Bordadora

GABRIELA REP LITA Mana yesterday expressed disappointment over the decision of the House committee on foreign affairs' to return to the committee the resolution demanding apology from Japan for the atrocities against Filipino comfort women in World War II.

Mana was reacting to the announcement this week by Lobo City Rep. Antonio Cuenco that House Resolution 124 will again have to be voted on after a Japanese diplomat raised concern over the lack of specifics that attended the adoption of the resolution on March 11.

Cuenco said the Japanese had an business questioning what the resolution did but added the adoption of the resolution should be beyond reproach. The committee is expected to be passed by the House plenary itself or it expires legislative inquiry.

"The bitter—Filipino victims of wartime sexual slavery by the Japanese Imperial Army—have long been waiting for a significant initiative from the Philippine government to help them in pursuing justice," Mana said.

"Why such dilly-dallying on this measure when Resolution 121 already is that 70s and 80s? We all know that Congress can surely speed up measures if the body really desire it so," she added.

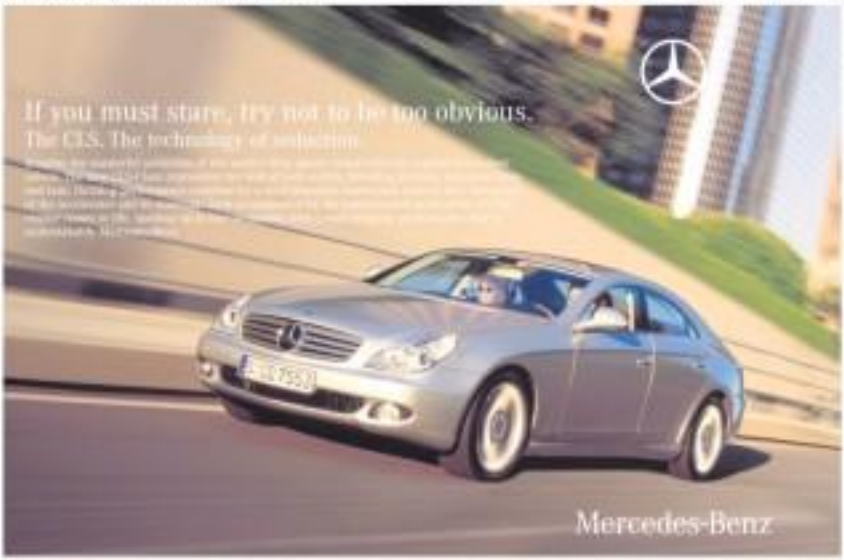
Mana said House Resolution 124 is a call for the Philippine government to formally acknowledge, apologize and accept historical responsibility over the sexual slavery of women during World War II.

She said that an approval of the resolution would bring the Philippines in par with the United States, Canada, the Netherlands and Australia, all of which passed similar resolutions last year.

The Gabriela solon also pointed out that House Resolution 890, supporting moves for congressional resolution which the filed during the 13th Congress, was likewise approved at the Committee on Foreign Affairs but wasn't taken up at the plenary.

"I am hopeful for House Resolution 124 to be tackled immediately since Congress resumes session on April 21 thanks to our comfort women backing been delayed and long denied," Mana said.

"It would be such a shame if a real government not to take the subjects for the victims in our own country," she added.



Panganiban tells SC: Reverse Neri ruling

Front page 1

In a 94-page, the tribunal declared that the three questions raised in the Senate inquiry into the aborted $330-million National Broadband Network (NBN) project with China's ZTE Corp. fell within the purview of constitutionally protected presidential communications.

The questions were whether the President told Neri to proceed with the NBN project after he told her about an alleged attempt by former Commissioner on Elections Ubde Benjamin Abalos to bribe him to endorse the NBN deal, whether she told Neri to go on the project and whether she directed him to give it priority.

The court also nullified a move by the Senate to cite Neri in contempt and order his arrest.

Ms Arroyo invoked the broadband deal in view the nation's bureaucracy electronically via the Internet following allegations of massive kickbacks that implicated her husband and triggered calls for her resignation.

In its motion for reconsideration, the Senate said that the dangers of presidential abuse had significantly increased and assured that the government was heading toward "autocracy" unless the court reversed its ruling.

Truth cannot be sacrificed

In an address to the good governance conference, called Bantayog Bicam (New Pinoy) 2009 under the auspices of the World Bank, Panganiban spoke on the theme of openness.

CHIEF Justice Reynato Puno: On the last case

EX-Chief Justice Artemio Panganiban: Truth cannot be sacrificed

"Truth can never be sacrificed in the name of the economy or convenience or greed. Truth is the basis of credibility that in turn is the indispensable ingredient of successful governance," Panganiban said.

"Integrity goes beyond mere honesty or the refusal to tell a falsehood; it is the moral courage to denounce a wrong and to promote the truth; to punish the greedy to chase the robbers and to prosecute the tyrants," he said.

In the interview later with reporters, Panganiban was also asked whether the Supreme Court had become too independent and was becoming influential by the Arroyo administration in its decision-making on the cases of operators.

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He said he did not want to believe so.

Bedrock of democracy

He said he was hoping that the Supreme Court would remain the "bedrock of truth and democracy in the country."

Panganiban also said there was still a chance for the Supreme Court to reverse its decisions, adding that it would not be the first time that the high tribunal would overturn its ruling, if ever it would do so.

Asked whether the court decisions reflected his own beliefs, Panganiban said it should not be blamed on his successors. "There is limit to one's ability to persuade by virtue of moral ascendancy," Panganiban said.

Junket time: Solons flying to South Africa

Front page 1

ture Speaker and Pampanga Rep. Jose de Venecia heads the 11-member House delegation, according to a copy of the itinerary.

Villar and De Venecia are expected to deliver speeches at the April 13-16 conference at the Cape Town International Convention Center, which pulls in parliamentarians every year to tackle key issues.

The theme of this year's conference is "Pushing Back the Frontiers of Poverty."

And no, it is not a junket, according to some of the lawmakers.

"I don't know anything about junket. This is a working trip," Zambales Rep. Ma. Milagros Magsaysay said. "If there's a junket, I'd rather spend it junket with my family."

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said he had no expectations of enjoying a junket.

"Not me ... I work myself to the bone and earn every cent to the Senate speech for me," Pimentel said in a statement, adding that he had to attend the conference because he had been elected by the Asean and asia-Pacific group to represent the region at the IPU human rights committee.

Business class

Most of the lawmakers are flying business class. A number are traveling with their spouses.

According to the website of an international carrier that flies to Cape Town from Manila, the cost of round-trip business class tickets range from $3,958 to $3,473 depending on the date of the flight.

The senators—Villar, Pimentel, Reggie Estrada, Francis Pangilinan, Panfilo Lacson, Ramon Revilla Jr., Francis Escudero, Miriam Perse Cayetano and Pia Cayetano—are billeted at the Mandela Road and Holiday Inn.

Except for De Venecia, who is billeted at the Mandela, the House members—Magsaysay, Antonio Cerilles of Zamboanga del Sur, Jose Carlos Lacson of Negros Occidental, Carlos Padilla of Nueva Vizcaya, Crispin Remulla of Cavite, Stephen Almeda of Batangas, Edcamin Gullas of Cebu, Lala Taliño-Mendoza of South Cotabato, Teodoro Casiño of Bayan and Luis Main of Gabriela—are billeted at the Southern Sun Mowlfred Hotel and Hollow On the Square.

The House is paying for the air fare of its members, but not their hotel accommodations.

The sponsor of Senators Villar, Pimentel, Estrada, Revilla, Escudero and Alan Peter Cayetano, and of Representatives De Venecia, Cerilles, Remulla, Gullas and Mendoza will shoulder their own plane fare.

Harassment of lawmakers

Casiño and Main were invited by IPU Secretary General Anders Johnsson to attend the hearing of the IPU's human rights committee on the first day, according to their staffs.

Casiño, who flew ahead of the delegation to attend a session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights' Universal Periodic Review in Geneva this week, and Main are flying economy to Cape Town, their staffs said.

"We were invited to Cape Town to report to the IPU what happened to the cases of members of Congress who are being persecuted by the Arroyo government," Casiño told reporters on Monday.

Main said she would attend the conference in person to update on the status of the cases filed against her and other "Bayanis No"—the group of militant party-list lawmakers detained for alleged involvement in a plot to destabilize the government.

"This is part of the IPU's efforts in monitoring the status of human rights of parliamentarians worldwide," she said.

In a statement, Gabriela said Main would be attending the conference at no expense to the House.

It said it had raised the funds to cover Main's travel and accommodation expenses.

Backing Pia

Magsaysay said her main role in the conference would be to support Pia Cayetano's bid to chair a committee for the IPU.

"I don't know what there to help me Pia, who is running for a position. That's one of the reasons I'm going there. I'll be thanking lawmen the committee and the host. Ask the others what they'll be doing during the conference," Magsaysay told the reporter.

Cayetano is vying for the presidency of the IPU's coordinating committee of women parliamentarians, and the senator has sought Arroyo's support for candidacy.

In his report to the Department of Foreign Affairs, Philippine Ambassador to Jordan Adras U. Torres said that he, along with Consul General Renato Villa, met with Jordan's Senate President Zaid Rifai at the national assembly in Amman to hand over Senate President Villar's letter requesting the Jordanian government's support.

Pimentel said the meeting of the IPU human rights committee would tackle, among others, the government crackdown in Burma (Myanmar), the killings in Sri Lanka, and even the detentions of the Philippines' Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV a former rebel military officer.

"My work begins and ends five days later," Pimentel said.

A member of a congressman's staff, who asked not to be named for lack of authority to speak on the record, summed up the significance of the conference: "It's an international consultation. It's a major event of parliamentarians. It's a forum where they discuss issues in plenary."

He added: "It is a junket? That depends on one's opinion."

House's top man

As leader of the House delegation, De Venecia gets to somehow reprise his former role as the chamber's top man.

Speaker Prospero Nograles said he would forego the trip because he had to undergo a medical checkup and needed time to study the Philippines' archipelagic baselines so that the executive and Congress would have a united stand on the issue.

"The conference will cover several areas, including poverty and the need for food security. The rising cost of food is already an international problem," Remulla said.

He said De Venecia was more than capable of heading the House delegation despite his current duties as former Speaker and vice cynic of the Arroyo administration.

"He's the best diplomat around ... no exaggeration," Remulla said.

According to Nograles' staff, the House counterpart is composed of six official delegates (De Venecia, Remulla, Magsaysay Lacson, Padilla and Casiño) and five observers (Cerilles, Nicolas, Gullas, Taliño and Main).

"What I know is that from the House, only plane tickets will be given to the six official delegates to the IPU," Nograles said in a text message.

"Usually, the host countries [shoulder] the expenses for food and accommodations). We entertain strict restraint on House expenses," he said.

$180 per diem

According to Remulla, the official delegates will receive a disance or upends on the conference floor, and "The non-official delegates will be involved in the drafting of resolutions."

He said the House members were entitled to a daily allowance of $180—enough, he pointed out, to get a good hotel room with breakfast, but not be representation expenses as part of their jobs as delegates.

"We are representing the country [there]," Remulla said, adding:

"[But] the fact that senators are going ... and party-list members are going, shows that this is not a junket.

"This trip is a working one."

Remulla said the House delegation was preparing inputs for the conference.

"We're not without facts and figures in both up what we will be talking about there. You don't come in there clueless," he said.

Remulla said he would take his wife along on the trip, but only because he would pay for their plane fare and hotel accommodations.

"I might not be to South Africa again.... I hope is not a few elephants and a few lions," he said. "But that will be other entertainment."

Remulla said this would be his second foreign trip as a lawmaker. He said he was able to travel more often as a private citizen because his family owned a travel agency.

But now, he said, "one obligation got in the way [of travel]."

Obligation

Padilla defended the lawmakers' trip to Cape Town, saying they had an obligation to attend the conference because the Philippines was a party to the IPU.

Besides, he said, the issues to be tackled would "directly or indirectly affect" the Philippines, and the lawmakers' participation in the conference would enhance their legislative skills.

"It's not a junket. My impression of the junket is that you go there for pleasure, sightseeing," Padilla said on the phone. "This is a working trip. I will be representing the House of Representatives in an important event." With reports from Rona Z. Fuentlinger and Cynthia D. Balana

Hanjin denies pullout threat

Front page 1

this administration's most prized achievements. Certain sections of the media who do not approve of the administration are seeking to undermine that achievement."

Hanjin has invested $1.35 billion on a shipyard at the Subic Bay Freeport in Zambales and planned to build another $2 billion facility in Tagoloan, Misamis Oriental.

Recently, the firm came under fire from environmentalists for the construction of its two high-rise residential buildings in the middle of Subic's built forests.

Asked by the lawyers in an interview on Monday how he felt about the controversy, Shim said: "To be frank with you, I am at a loss because sometimes the thing which I don't think will create a big issue appears a very big issue."

The issues were related to safety in Hanjin's Subic shipyard where seven workers had died in accidents since last December; inadequate resettlement for displaced families, alleged unsanitary food given to workers and the Forest construction.

"In this apartment matter, we submitted our plan and we got a building permit from SBMA. But the owner of the newspaper was pointing that Hanjin pulled all the environment and as if Hanjin is the one who demolished the many, many trees. But in fact, this is the phone. This a letter we started our construction. There are no trees. It is empty land with some small bushes and some small buildings," he said.

'We will continue'

Asked if Hanjin would still continue doing business in the Philippines, Shim replied: "Since we already started our investment, we will continue our investment."

The Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority's own land-use plan banned any development on the Baras Forest Line, where the condominium buildings are located, as stated in the environmental compliance certificate (ECC) issued by the SBMA to Hanjin.

"It will not be developed," said SBMA land-use plan in Baras Forest Line. The plan, prepared in 2000, was shown up with the assistance of the International Tropical Timber Organization Group of the World Bank.

In Hanjin's ECC, issued on July 4, 2007, the exact location stated by the SBMA was "Naval Magazine, Baras Kasi Forest."

Told of this policy, SBMA Administrator Armand Arreza promised a map showing that the two buildings were located at the boundary of that forest.

Wrong reference

Arreza made a wrong reference to the place," Arreza said, attributing the mistake to executive duty Lhina Raval, chief of the SBMA zoology review division signed Hanjin's ECC.

"Yes, that was an error. It happens sometimes," Raval said when reached by the long term.

Intelligent suspicions by environmental groups that SBMA allowed the cutting of many trees, Arreza showed two old survey maps by the US Department of the Navy.

ARTIST'S perspective of the two high-rise condominiums by Korean shipbuilder Hanjin Heavy Industries & Construction Ltd. inside the 1,800-hectare Subic Watershed Forest Reserve. This caption was modified on actual shot of the buildings in yesterday's issue. Our apologies. Ed.

The first map, dated May 21, 1968, and made by a "tree spotting and drainage plan" near the extension runway lines, showed details of "RW/W from A + B." 6250' stands for air and ammunition magazine, Arreza said, noting the previous uses.

US Navy cleared forests

"This part of the forests was really cleared in the time of the US Navy because the area had prior uses," Arreza said.

The second map, dated May 31, 1966, was for the same plan on the same site. It gave details of Area B.

Both survey maps were made by the Bureau of Forest Development Archives.

Area A is generally used by the company Polar Machine while Area B is the site leased to Hanjin's condominiums.

The 1966 map also showed that roads were previously built in access to both areas.

Trial by publicity

Jun Jung Jung, president of the Korean Chamber of Commerce Philippines Inc., yesterday condemned a "seeming trial by publicity" of Hanjin "undertakers without due process and protection."

Jung expressed concern that Hanjin, after pouring in $1.35 billion in the shipyard that had created some 10,000 jobs, would be "unjustly tagged as a threat to either or public order and to expose to unwarranted attacks and clouds of suspicion without proper verification."

The indignation of environmentalists has been stoked by news reports on the construction of two buildings—one towering 22 stories and another at 12 stories—purportedly to house foreign workers on Hanjin's shipyard in Subic Bay.

Jung maintained that Hanjin's construction of the two buildings were shrouded and legal, citing SBMA assurance that the project had the required government permits and an environmental compliance certificate.

Uncalled for

He pointed out that the construction site had long been cleared of trees, having been used as an ammunition storage facility of the former US Subic Bay Naval Base. "It is highly uncalled for to say that Hanjin disregarded environmental laws," he said.

Jung said that if the underlying issue was environmental protection it should have been raised at the outset of construction, not when the project was 95 percent complete.

"This incident betrays the real situation in the Philippine investment climate: the sanctity and stability of contracts are not protected," Jung said.

In a separate statement, Arreza said the two Hanjin buildings were now within the so-called "zero development zone" in Subic.

Arreza explained that the Hanjin project was within the Cubi-Wilson Division, which has been designated for low-impact development projects.

He said other facilities found in this zone are the Boeing Philippines aerospace aircraft parts assembly plant (1999), and the NGH Manufacturing's factory for molded gloves (1999). With reports from Romeo B. Bonoan Jr. and Kristine L. Alave

Running priest asks SC to annul DOJ travel ban

FR. REYES

ACTIVIST PRIEST Fr. Robert Reyes has asked the Supreme Court to lift and declare illegal and unconstitutional the hold departure order issued against him by Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez, saying that because of it he is subjected to harassment every time he tries to leave the country.

Reyes questioned the power of the justice secretary to issue such an order, as well as the Court of Appeals' dismissal of his petition for a writ of amparo in connection with the HDO.

The order was issued after a rebellion complaint was filed against Reyes and several others for their alleged participation in the November 2007 attempted rebellion by mutinous officers at the Manila Peninsula hotel. The rebellion complaint against Reyes has since been dismissed.

In a petition filed last Tuesday, Reyes said only courts can issue HDOs, citing a Supreme Court circular. He added that the DOJ order violated his constitutional right to travel.

Right to travel

"The DOJ is not a court of law, much less could it be equated with a regional trial court. Moreover, there is no law providing the DOJ Secretary with the power to issue an HDO in the interest of national security, public safety or public health," he said.

He also disputed the appellate court's ruling that his right to travel had not been violated because it is the regular practice of the justice secretary to issue HDOs.

"Since when has 'regular exercise' become the source of law? How often can a certain use of a claimed authority be the very legal basis for the exercise of said authority? This is simply absurd," Reyes said.

Not a law

Reyes also assailed the appellate court's finding that the issuance of the HDO was in line with a justice department circular issued in 1976.

He said the circular was not a law and considered the act of the justice secretary granting himself such a power. The circular was also not based on any law, as it could not have the force of law, he added.

Reyes said that just because the justice secretary's issuance of HDOs has never been questioned did not mean that such a power exists.

He also challenged the argument of the Office of the Solicitor General that the Administrative Code empowers the justice secretary to issue HDOs. Lailani B. Sadongdong

Japanese to be deported for hitting Cebu gov's daughter

By Tarra Quismundo

AN ELDERLY JAPANESE TRAVELER who allegedly hit a Filipino politician's daughter during an altercation over baggage claims at the domestic airport Tuesday may be banned from returning to Manila, an immigration official said yesterday.

Ivan Tanaka, a 65-year-old businessman was immediately detained and is expected to be deported after summary proceedings after complaint was made by Maria Paguia-Cristina Garcia-Cuddia, 26, daughter of Cebu Gov. Gwen Garcia.

"We will be deported immediately for being an undesirable tourist," said Ferdinand Sampol, immigration chief at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA).

Tanaka's version of the incident, however, was not revealed.

The elderly man is currently detained in an immigration holding cell in Camp Bagong Diwa in Taguig City.

Cuddia claimed the Japanese man suddenly hit her in the back as they waited to retrieve their baggage at the Mabuhay Centennial Terminal's domestic wing.

According to airport police, both had just arrived from Cebu via Philippine Airlines flight PR 948 and were standing by the baggage conveyor when Tanaka allegedly blew up at Cuddia for putting her push cart right in front of the conveyor machine, blocking other passengers from picking up their bags.

Cuddia claims she suddenly felt a punch at her back. She then alerted police, who immediately took custody of Tanaka and seized his passport.

Esperon: Pardon possible for 9 Army officers

By Inquirer staff

President Macapagal-Arroyo...

Esperon pointed out that last year, Ms Arroyo granted unconditional clemency to 33 mutiny soldiers that led to a commemoration of their issuance. They were discharged from military service and were freed a month before their scheduled release on Jan. 27.

Asked if he thought Gamboa et al. deserved to be pardoned, Esperon said he did not want to speculate on their fates as "it is [within] on the prerogative of the President."

In fact, he said, he would make a recommendation on whether they should be pardoned or not only if the President told him to do so. And there has been no such directive from Ms Arroyo, he said.

Esperon headed the Army before he was appointed AFP chief. He is scheduled to retire on May 9.

In the first mass coup d'etat conviction in the country, Gamboa and 30 noncoms were sentenced on Tuesday to up to 40 years in prison by Judge Cicero Pimentel of the Makati Regional Trial Court Branch 148.

Pimentel imposed 6- to 12-year prison terms on seven officers—Capt. Alberto Rabaloy, John Andres and Alvin Divo, and Lieutenants Laurence Lito Somera, Florentino Somera, Christopher Brian Tuazy and Clee Dungganon—who were found to have been mere "participants" in the Magdalo group's daylong takeover of the then Oakwood Premier serviced apartments in Makati City.

'Deal' with the gov't

The nine convicted officers, along with some 300 other Magdalo soldiers including then Navy Lt. Antonio Trillanes IV, now a senator in detention, led a token seize the Oakwood building to denounce alleged corruption in the military and the government and to demand the resignation of Ms Arroyo and top AFP officials.

But last week, Gamboa et al. suddenly changed their plea to "guilty" of charges of coup d'etat—a move that triggered speculations of a deal with the government they tried to bring down five years ago.

On the phone with the Inquirer, Tiong Cruz Angeles, lawyer of fugitive Marine Capt. Nicanor Bedras, said more that the conviction of Gamboa et al. is a genuine court martial but yet to be finalized much a year after the sentence was handed down).

CAPT. GERARDO Gamboa (center) helps his guard escort the Army truck that will bring him to his prison cell after he was sentenced to up to 40 years in prison on Tuesday for his part in the 2003 Oakwood mutiny. PHOTO BY GERARD SEE

Gamboa et al., who had also admitted guilt in the charges against them in the court-martial, were recommended for discharge from the service.

By way of explanation, Esperon said the sentence handed down in the court-martial had not been finalized because of the nine officers' then pending civilian court case.

But Angeles said the court-martial sentence's being "held in abeyance to answer the jurisdiction of the AFP over Gamboa's group" was "among the indications" that had given her and other defense lawyers "reason to conclude that there's a deal."

Commissioned officers in the AFP can only be discharged or dismissed from service upon the President's approval.

Mitigating circumstances

"In this point, the AFP still just have to appreciate Gamboa and the rest for owning up to their guilt," said Esperon, who, however, let his fellow officers stand against rebellious soldiers.

But he said there were "mitigating circumstances" in the case of the nine convicted officers, he pointed out, "many back to barracks peacefully, have become staunch advocates against military adventurism, have behaved well while they were in confinement."

"They have shown remorse, so probably there is [a possibility of a pardon]. But given all those things, I still would not make any convenience toward a pardon because as I said, that's entirely the President's prerogative," Esperon said.

After the Makati court's conviction of Gamboa et al., only 22 other Magdalo officers led by Trillanes remain on trial.

In a press conference, Sen. Francis Escudero said his opinion was that a pardon for Gamboa et al. would be "unjustified" because they had committed "a political crime."

"What it means is that what they did is a crime only because they failed. Had they succeeded, it would not be considered a crime," the opposition senator said.

No cassidy

Escudero pointed out that because there was no casualty in the Oakwood mutiny, it would be easier to extend a pardon.

"It would be a different story if somebody had been hurt or aggrieved," he said.

Escudero refused to speculate on whether Gamboa et al. had forged a deal with the administration.

But he said the possible pardons would not apply to Trillanes for so long as the latter continues to contest the charges filed against him by the government in court.

"[As] in the case of former President Joseph Estrada, pardon cannot be available if there is an admission of guilt. This was borne in many forms, such as pleading guilty or withdrawing an appeal for a motion for reconsideration, like what President Estrada did," Escudero said.

The ousted President was convicted of plunder in Sept. 2007 and granted executive clemency by Ms Arroyo less than two months later.

No deal

Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro shrugged off speculation that the government had dangled a presidential pardon to Gamboa et al., prompting them to change their plea to "guilty."

"A plea of guilt—and accepting the consequences...is a very heavy decision to make. Even though a pardon would be dangled, as whatever, you have to think twice sometimes. So I don't think that would be a reasonable thing to assume in this point," Teodoro told reporters after attending the commemoration rites led by the President for war veterans at the Mount Samat Shrine, in Pilar, Bataan.

Esperon, who was also at the Mount Samat Shrine, said talk of the purported deal was "purely speculative on the part of some people."

He said he was actually surprised that the nine convicted officers had changed their plea.

"The matter of pleading guilty was their own action," he added.

Esperon said the decision of Gamboa et al. to concede guilt was "something that I admire."

Asked whether that meant he would support the group if a pardon would be considered, he said: "I did not say that. I admire what they did. Remember, Gamboa was my operations chief in Basilan."

Asked whether he was then sympathetic to Gamboa et al., he replied: "I am not saying I have shared everything."

Esperon said that should his recommendation be sought on the matter, he would give "my piece."

"I want a thorough study on this. Then, if I'll be asked, I'll give my opinion," he said.

Evidence

In Malacañang, Chief Presidential Legal Counsel Sergio Apostol said the "guilty" plea of "two conspirators (Maestrecampo and Gamboa)" would affect Trillanes' case.

But whether Trillanes will be convicted "depends on the evidence and the appreciation by the judge of the evidence," Apostol said in a phone interview.

Teodoro and Esperon aired similar views.

Apostol said that if Gamboa et al. would not appeal their convictions, "the judgment becomes final and they can apply for a presidential pardon" before the Board of Pardons and Parole, which in turn would make a recommendation to the President. With reports from Christine O. Avendaño and Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

ENJOY APRIL'S Summer THRILLS!

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
Regional Office No. IV-A
April 10, 2008

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office applications for Alien Employment Permits:

Name and Address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National Employee/s	Position
1. MAGCAM DOLOMITE PHILIPPINES, INC. Lagtang, Tanauan City, Batangas	Mr. Tony Higuchi Japanese	Processing Manager
2. MAGCAM DOLOMITE PHILIPPINES, INC. Lagtang, Tanauan City, Batangas	Mr. Kazuhiro Kakuno Japanese	Chief Engineer, Engineering Department
3. HONDA CARS PHILIPPINES, INC. Honda Avenue Complex, Ortigas Ave., Greenhills, San Juan, Metro Manila	Mr. Shin Mori Chinese	Production Manager
4. KUBOTA PHILIPPINES CORPORATION KM. 45, Brgy. Lamesan, Sta. Maria, Bulacan	Mr. Yoshiko Fujioka Japanese	Manager, PCB-E Division
5. T-TECH PHILIPPINES MANUFACTURING, INC. Lagtang, Tanauan City, Batangas	Mr. Hajime Ishihara Japanese	President
6. SUMITOMO PHILIPPINES MANUFACTURING, LTD. Lagtang, Tanauan City, Batangas	Mr. Andrew Gregor Ramirez American	Design Lead
7. NISSHIN FLOUR MILLING PHILIPPINES CORPORATION 2/F Brgy. Bulsa, Calamba City	Mr. Hiroki Nagaoka Japanese	Department Manager
8. NIPPON INDUSTRIES CORPORATION Brgy. Pittland, Pamplona, Cavite	Mr. Yongjie Zhao Chinese	Production Technician
9. NIPPON INDUSTRIES CORPORATION Brgy. Pittland, Pamplona, Cavite	Mr. Fengfeng Zhao Chinese	Fabric Maker
10. NIPPON INDUSTRIES CORPORATION Brgy. Pittland, Pamplona, Cavite	Mr. Wenhui Zhao Chinese	Production Technician
11. MITSUBISHI BANK OF TOKYO PLAZA BANKING CORPORATION 7/F Pacific Plaza, Calamba City	Mr. Hongqiang Zhai Chinese	Maintenance
12. INTERNATIONAL RETIREMENT & LEISURE CORPORATION Villa Pola, San Jose, Tanauan City	Mr. Yukio Kubo Indian	Product Development Manager

If you have any information/objection/s on the above-mentioned application/s please communicate with this Regional Director.

ATTY. RICARDO S. MARTINEZ, DR., CESO III
Regional Director

LAND BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Land Bank of the Philippines invites applicants/manufacturers/distributors/contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the projects as stated below:

Item / Description	Approved Budget	Bond Terms		Date Documents Are Available
		Bid Bond Submission	Deadline/ Opening of Bids	
1. Lot Supply of Laser Jobs, Equipment Parts, Material, Technical Expertise, Supervision, Labor and Incidentals pertaining to the Installation, Testing and Commissioning and Operation of the Desktop Security Application and Management (Photocopying Security) Solution, Brgy. Bulihan, Malaybalay City, Bukidnon	P1,000,000.00	April 17, 2008 10:00 AM	May 2, 2008 10:00 AM	7/F LBP
2. [illegible]	P1,000,000.00	April 17, 2008 10:00 AM	May 2, 2008 10:00 AM	7/F LBP
3. [illegible]	P1,000,000.00	April 17, 2008 2:00 PM	May 2, 2008 10:00 AM	7/F LBP

The Bid Documents will be available after Procurement Department opening hours. For more information, please call 405-7277, 811-2000 local 7277.

The Philippine Government and the Bank of Philippines Islands, Bonifacio Drive, Port Area, 1018 Manila, Philippines, P.O. Box 1000, Manila, Philippines, reserves the right to reject or accept any bid, to annul the bidding process, and to accept the offer most advantageous to the government and Land Bank without incurring any liability to the affected bidder(s).

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

2 Pinoys fined in HK for taking plane's life vests

By Inquirer staff

two they pleaded guilty to the charge of theft. The life jackets were only HK$400 each.

"Do you know such other?" asked the judge, who got curious why the two would take life jackets from their flight. So apparently did our former four many Filipinos had a possibility of taking with them "souvenirs" from hotels, airplanes and other places they visited.

Both Filipinos denied becoming souvenirs. They were married ex-officers years when they received letter of arrested 2:20 p.m. on Tuesday for a connecting Flight to Manila.

Hidden in bags

Ramos occupied Seat No. 30B while Asuncion was in No. 47H, but they apparently had the urge to take the life jackets under their seats.

Asuncio put the jacket in his blue traveling bag, while Ramos hid his in a red shopping bag. They did not foresee that they would be arrested and charged in court for taking "souvenirs."

When they got to the passenger terminal building of the Chek Lap Kok International Airport, their belongings had to go through an X-ray machine before they were allowed to board their flight. Airport security officers have told investigators that they noticed "suspicious objects" in the Filipinos' bags.

The passengers were searched and the life jackets were found. Ramos supposedly even wrapped his jacket with a blanket.

The security officers reported the incident to the police and Cathay Pacific staff members, who confirmed that the life jackets were missing.

During police interrogations, the Filipinos denied any wrongdoing, but they later pleaded guilty upon the advice of lawyers after they were brought to court.

SC: Farmers' groups may intervene in coco levy case

By Lila B. Salvosa

THE SUPREME COURT HAS RULED THAT **cocolevy farmers' organizations** have the right to take part in a pending court case involving a challenge on the ownership of the coconut levy funds.

The high court has denied a petition of **businessman Eduardo Cojuangco** seeking to stop the intervention of farmers' groups, former senators Jovito Salonga and Wigberto Tañada and former congressman Victor Savino to join the suit.

The case, filed by **the government against** Cojuangco, seeks to overturn the anti-graft court's ruling that a 20 percent block of disputed San Miguel Corp. shares was not part of the coco-levy funds.

The high court said Salonga, Tañada and Savino were suing as taxpayers, while the Sinfuegan del Sur Federation of Agricultural Cooperatives (Fasfac), Mina Pinamero Association of Cadalonggan del Sur (MOKAS) **and Pambansang Kilusang mga Samahan** ng Magsasaka (Pakisama) were intervening in the case in their capacity as farmers who had paid the levy a forced tax imposed by the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

And since the coconut levy funds are considered prima facie public funds, as it ruled in another case, the high tribunal said the **groups had the right to intervene in the suit** as taxpayers.

"The present controversy may be the proper subject of a taxpayer's suit since the Republic is claiming that, inter alia, respondent Cojuangco acquired the subject San Miguel Corp. shares by unlawfully using coconut levy funds during the Marcos regime, funds which, as jointly mentioned, have been found to be prima facie public in character," it **said in a resolution dated March 28.**

The high court said it is the court's discretion to decide whether to allow parties to intervene.

Cojuangco argued that a motion to intervene could only be filed before the trial court hands down its ruling. He also said the groups wishing to intervene did not **have any legal interest in the issue.**

No party will get upper hand in merger of Lakas, Kampi

By Alcuin Papa

NO SINGLE PARTY WILL GET THE UPPER hand in the merger between majority Lakas party and the **Kabalikat ng Malayang** Pilipino (Kampi), said Kampi chair Honasan Pano yesterday.

But Pano also conceded that Lakas was "an older party" and would enjoy certain privileges according to the rules of the Commission on Elections (Comelec).

"There will be no question of upper hand although because they are an older party. Under the rules of Comelec they have a higher ranking as a dominant party than Kampi," Pano said.

He also said Kampi would benefit from a merger with Lakas. "So rather than confusing the issue and mess up the status of Lakas as dominant party, we want to keep that intact."

At present, Pano said negotiations for the merger are moving but are being slowed down by the "internal issues" within the Lakas party.

In February, Lakas president and House **Speaker Jose De Venecia was ousted from** the speakership and is in danger of losing his position in the party.

"We are still waiting. The ball is in the court of Lakas. They have internal issues to **address first."**

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Thursday, April 10, 2008
2nd Week of Easter

Jn 6:44-51

Jesus said to the crowds, "No one can come to me unless he is drawn by the Father who sent me; and I will raise him up on the last day. It has been written in the Prophets, They shall all be taught by God. So whoever hears and learns from the Father comes to me.

"Not as if any has seen the Father except the One who comes from God, he has seen the Father. Truly, I say to you, whoever believes has everlasting life.

"I am the bread of life. Though your ancestors ate the manna in the desert, they died. But here you have the bread which comes from heaven so that you may eat of it and not die.

"I am the living bread which has come from heaven; whoever eats of this bread will live forever. The bread I shall give is my flesh and I will give it for the life of the world."

Commentary:

Again, Jesus makes the point that he is the Bread of Life, the One sent by the Father to give life to the whole human race. *Just as the people of Israel would have been foolish to decline the opportunity to gather daily the manna that God rained down from above, so too are we sadly mistaken when we ignore opportunities to read with the eyes of faith the Lord offers us in the Word in the Scriptures.*

Without the manna the Israelites would have perished. Without the Eucharistic Lord in us we cannot hope to live.

GMA signs new veterans' law

By Tarra Quismundo
Inquirer Central Luzon
and Michael Lim Ubac
in Manila

MT. SAMAT, PAMPANGA—FILIPINO veterans of World War II will still be entitled to monthly lifetime pensions and benefits from the U.S. Congress approved the proposed Filipino Veterans Equity Bill.

President Macapagal-Arroyo gave the assurance as she signed the public law into law at the site "Filipino World War II Veterans Pensions and Benefits Act of 2008" during ceremonies marking the 66th commemoration of Araw ng Kagitingan here yesterday.

Ms Arroyo signed the law in the presence of some 2,000 war veterans and their family members gathered at the Dambana ng Kagitingan, a 46-year-old war memorial built on the mountaintop to pay homage to the sacrifices of Filipino soldiers.

The law allows Filipino veterans to continue receiving their pensions and benefits from the Philippine government in addition to similar pensions and benefits to be provided by the US government.

Filipino veterans currently receive a monthly old age pension of P5,000 from the government.

"I am too happy," said Lilia Navarro, the widow of Domador Navarro who served in the medical corps of the US Armed Forces in the Far East (Usafe) during the war.

"$15,000 is not enough to buy medicines," said Navarro, an 83-year-old grandmother who came all the way from Isa Tayabas, Pangasi.

"It is good news, signed bill—the gift from the [President]," said Benedicto Ramos, 86, of Bataan. "At least I would get to enjoy the fruits of long waiting."

Veterans and their dependents have complained that their monthly benefits pension was not enough to pay for their food, medicines and other basic needs, and has not been increased for several years now.

But while speech, Ms Arroyo did not cite any additional benefits under the new law.

US Ambassador to the Philippines Kristie Kenney confirmed President George W. Bush's commitment to sign into law the equity bill if the US Congress passed the measure before his term ends this year.

But the US Senate and House of Representatives would still have to reconcile at least two bills, the said, American legislators differed on the amount of the pension, which ranged from $300 (P12,534.0) to $9,000 (P25,068).

The equity bill has already passed the US Senate's Veterans Affairs Committee and the House Veterans Committee last year, 10 years since its introduction in the American Congress.

The principal author of the law in the Philippine Senate, Jinkee Richard Gordon, said "this is the best chance ever" to push for the passage of the equity law.

"Our veterans have grown old," Gordon said.

He recalled that US President Theodore Roosevelt had promised the pensions and benefits to Filipino veterans but that had been overlooked. Efforts to get the benefits had not prospered in the ranks of the next US presidents.

Gordon, whose father is an American, said he started working on the recently signed law when he was a mayor of Olongapo City.

The senator will leave for the United States on Thursday to meet with American legislators.

President Arroyo said a joint executive-legislative team led by Senator Richard Gordon and Rongotas Rep. Jose Solis would leave for Washington this month to lobby for the passage of the veterans bill.

"But, of course, we still begin our lobbying with [US] Ambassador Kristie Kenney right here in Mt. Samat," said Ms Arroyo, eliciting a smile from Kenney who was seated beside Congressman Ambrosio Mahinay Rama.

If enacted, an estimated 7,000 Filipino-American veterans living in the United States and 12,000 Filipino veterans in the Philippines who both fought during WWII, would receive (24 veterans' status and be eligible for Veterans Affairs disability pension benefits.

Ms Arroyo told the veterans that despite the lack of budget, the government had started paying off debts to the veterans starting 2005.

She said at least P2 billion in old age pension arrears had been settled.

"Millions and millions of pesos" of benefits had been paid to 3,000 soldiers while nation of 5,000 children of veterans had also been paid, she added.

Ms Arroyo thanked Congress for agreeing to double the budget for the payment of the arrears this year. Congress, she said, approved P3.5 billion.

The Philippine Veterans Affairs Office (PVAO) has made it easy for veterans to receive their pensions and benefits through the ATMs (automated teller machines).

Out of the 240,000 pensioners in the 1946-9's list, only some 60,000 are WW II veterans. Most of the list are widows of veterans, according to PVAO Administrator and Deputy Undersecretary Ernesto Carolino.

The agency received a total of P20 billion this year to pay pensions for old age, death and disability. Carolino said. Disability pay stands at P1,700 monthly; the death pension for spouses and children, P3,000 monthly; hospitalization, P400 daily; and educational, P36,000 a year.

NFA stops use of 'indelible' ink to mark rice buyers

By Ephraim Aguilar
Inquirer Southern Luzon

LEGAZPI CITY—THE NATIONAL Food Authority in the Bicol region has ordered all the use of "indelible" ink to mark the figures of buyers of government-subsidized rice after the scheme drew sharp criticism.

Jose Guevarra, assistant NFA regional director, said the agency had been hearing complaints from various sectors and the media that the subsidizing of buyers "dismisses the poor," who are spending for the cheap rare because they cannot afford the commercial varieties.

Guevarra said rice is now being sold there P28 to P34 per kilo here.

NFA rice is still pegged at P18.25 per kilo, but buyers are still limited to three kilos.

"We have been receiving many calls from the public, especially asking why it was necessary to use indelible ink," Guevarra said.

He explained it was not the intention of NFA retailers to offend the poor but to prevent repeat purchases by the same person on the same day.

Guevarra said the NFA had given orders extending through rice trade organizations like Gabon, to call off the use of indelible ink starting Thursday.

"We have to be sensitive and considerate of public opinion," he said in a mobile phone interview.

He said the NFA office in Bicol also ordered retailers to devise other plans to prevent certain buyers from consuming overdoses.

"Now we see that the need we can do is to appeal to the public to help authorities ensure equal distribution of government rice," Guevarra said.

Philippine National Police Director General Avelino Razon yesterday said he would order an investigation of the use of "indelible" ink, saying that it could be a beast (problem) to voters' panic.

Guevarra said the Bicol region was expecting the delivery of 134,000 bags of rice from Vietnam this Friday and another 204,000 bags on April 16.

The NFA sells 9,112 bags of rice daily in the region, he said.

NFA plans to raise selling price of rice

Reuters

hike two days ago, was retailed at P42 a kilo yesterday.

A rice-trade source predicted that the price of "diamond" would reach P50 a kilo in a couple of days due to scarcity.

Unless Malacañang steps in to close the gap in the prices of government-subsidized rice and commercial rice, more in the nation could break out, Manny Pangilinan, Globe Asiatel owner, said yesterday.

While there is no rice shortage, the government could face a serious problem because of the "big disparity" in the selling prices of NFA rice and commercial rice, Asiatel said.

"If we run out of the NFA rice premium, then there will be long queues, and there will be panic buying," the Asiatel said at the Asia & Manyan Forum.

Consumers have no choice but to buy commercial rice should the NFA stock is depleted, said Asiatel, who served as PBB administrator during the Estrada administration.

"If that happens, we may experience the price rises like what happened in Indonesia and Egypt. Because of the soaring prices, there will be chaos," he said.

Food shortages to go on

Jacques Diouf, director general of the Food and Agriculture Organization, yesterday said that high food prices and shortages would continue to the near term, making some poorer countries vulnerable to food riots.

The Philippines, one of the world's biggest importers of rice, is struggling to ensure supply as exporting countries clamp down on shipments to curb inflation and traders hoard the grain.

The country has pulled out 40 thousand tons of rice from its warehouses and more shortages are expected.

Diouf told reporters in Rome that the price of "diamonds" would reach P50 a kilo in a couple of days due to scarcity.

Unless Malacañang steps in to close the gap in the prices of government-subsidized rice and commercial rice, more in the nation could break out, Manny Pangilinan, Globe Asiatel owner, said yesterday.

While there is no rice shortage, the government could face a serious problem because of the "big disparity" in the selling prices of NFA rice and commercial rice, Asiatel said.

"If we run out of the NFA rice premium, then there will be long queues, and there will be panic buying," the Asiatel said at the Asia & Manyan Forum.

Consumers have no choice but to buy commercial rice should the NFA stock is depleted, said Asiatel, who served as PBB administrator during the Estrada administration.

"If that happens, we may experience the price rises like what happened in Indonesia and Egypt. Because of the soaring prices, there will be chaos," he said.

Food shortages to go on

Jacques Diouf, director general of the Food and Agriculture Organization, yesterday said that high food prices and shortages would continue to the near term, making some poorer countries vulnerable to food riots.

The Philippines, one of the world's biggest importers of rice, is struggling to ensure supply as exporting countries clamp down on shipments to curb inflation and traders hoard the grain.

The country has pulled out 40 thousand tons of rice from its warehouses and more shortages are expected.

Balancing act

Gov. Francis Escudero warned Malacañang against importing more rice than what the country needed because it could hurt the farmers.

While high prices hurt consumers, they provide an incentive for rice farmers to expand their production because of higher margins, according to Escudero.

"It's a tough balancing act. If imports exceed local demand, farmers will be hard because it will be cheaper to import. They (farmers) will stop planting, we will now be dependent on imports. We will have no long-term food security," he said.

Reduced tariff

Escudero was worried that the government decision to lift the rice import quota of private traders could spell doom for the farmers should imported rice flood the market.

Under the new scheme, the lifts will charge private traders a minimum service fee of P2 per kilogram for importing the rice on their behalf and that private traders will not be subject to a hefty 50-percent tariff.

This move would be equivalent to private traders paying a tariff of under 10 percent, officials said.

Long queues at stores selling cheap rice, rationing and stashing of hoarded rice are signs that there is a rice shortage, the militant farmers group Makabayan ng Pilipinas said yesterday.

"Now we see longer and longer lines of people queuing for NFA rice, but the regime has drastically reduced the ration for each consumer from three kilos per person to just one. They are now even using marking systems like indelible ink, dye and postal pens to control the buying of rice," BMP chairman Rafael Mariano said.

Mariano urged President Macapagal-Arroyo, the Department of Agriculture and the NFA to admit that there was an ongoing rice crisis.

He said the Arroyo administration should no longer hesitate in enforcing more drastic measures such as price controls to prevent food riots.

Authorities have recalled warehouses as part of the crackdown on rice hoarding.

PEOPLE with motorbikes queuing there from the front of the April 8 rice fiesta along Commonwealth Avenue in Quezon City to buy the subsidized rice at P18.25 per kilo. JOHN PAUL GODINEZ

Raid in Bulacan

The National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) found 750 sacks of unpolished NFA rice in a warehouse in Bulacan province, during an inspection yesterday by its anti-Rice Hoarding Task Force.

NBI special investigator Rodolfo Magno said the rice in NFA sacks found inside an old rice found in the two warehouses of R.M.R. Rice Mill in Tarlac, Bulacan, Zambales, alongside 300 sacks of poor NFA rice.

Magno said the NBI would still be investigating whether a total of 189,776 sacks, valued at about P300 million, in the warehouses owned by Romeo Medina Jr. were repackaged NFA rice.

In the Bicol region, the NFA has suspended 68 rice retailers for various offenses.

"The majority of the suspended retailers committed overpricing, diversion of stocks and selling rice without price tags," NFA-Bicol information officer Alda Papa said in a phone interview.

Of the suspended retailers, 33 operated in Legazpi province, 20 in Camarines Sur, 10 in Camarines Norte, five in Catanduanes and two in Albay.

To prompt the diversion of NFA rice by unscrupulous traders who sell it as commercial variety, assistant military inspectors in Bulacan are rewarding NFA delivery trucks in Quezon province.

With reports from Reuters, AFP, TJ Burgonio, Allison B. Lopez and Jerome Aning in Manila, and Delfin F. Mallari Jr. and Jaymee T. Gamil, Inquirer Southern Luzon

US ready to supply rice to RP, says Kenney

Reuters

ed traders to join hands and close ranks to meet this challenge. This is no time for political posturing. We need food on the table, our headlines in the newspapers," the President said.

Kenney said the United States was also willing to help the Philippines achieve rice self-sufficiency through other means such as training and technical assistance.

"We could, in the longer term, we're considering to see research here because there's a lot of great work going on in the Philippines, multi-lateral, to create new strains of rice that are more nutritious and more disease-free. I'm really excited to be part of that," she said.

The Philippines seeks to buy this year 300,000 metric tons of rice from United States authorizing P75 million in credit guarantees from the US Department of Agriculture. The country is scrambling to import 2.2 million metric tons of rice to cover a production shortfall amid a tight global supply and soaring prices.

The ambassador explained that rice was very important issue in the Philippines but "probably less important in the United States, so it's a great partnership for us."

Kenney said the United States was not keen on following the move of China and Vietnam to limit their rice exports.

GMA hits fees

In his speech, Mr. Arroyo said the nation was facing challenges due to the global rise in the prices of basic commodities, yet the opposition was busy with politics.

The President made the pronouncement a day after economic sought a reconciliation with the Supreme Court ruling upholding executive's privilege.

She reiterated her call for national unity, saying the present situation required "decisive action," not political grandstanding.

Instead of indulging in too much politics, Ms Arroyo said everyone should focus on ensuring the lot of the ordinary Filipino amid the challenges posed by the slowdown in the US economy and the high global prices of fuel and rice.

Bowing to the opposition's demand for unity, she said: "We must invest, not just investigate. It is time for action, not political wrangling. The people deserve what we do as a people-powered agenda, not get wrapped up in political infighting."

The President said the "coalesce" investigations in the Senate would never put rice on the table, a carpenter in a classroom or a health clinic to a hospital.

Concrete solutions

Instead of politicking, Ms Arroyo said it was better to come up with concrete solutions and not empty promises as the limited Reform Gov. Eduardo Gonzalez for helping World War II veterans in his province by providing them with rice subsidies.

At the ceremony, Ms Arroyo also signed the Philippine Rice Research Institute Act, which would mandate the creation of the agency to develop high-yielding rice varieties and provide technical assistance to farmers.

Gilbert Serrano, Reuters

Subsidy, for his part, said the government would end up spending as much as P90 billion a year as subsidy to farmers to ensure a steady supply of rice.

"The Cabinet will consider the NFA's proposal, in light of our people's needs, what they can afford and the cost of rice subsidies, which could reach P90 billion in a year. It's good our people understand that global factors have driven rice prices, and all sectors should work with the government and not hamper the efforts to subsidize," he said.

Which is apart from "hoarding and profiteering."

With a report from Tonette Orejas, Inquirer Central Luzon

Belmonte on VMMC: Hospital in, golf course out

Foreground

who asked not to be named.

"I agree completely," said retired Army T/Sgt. Luis Liparde, another kidney patient treated nearby.

Assuming "rumor" that the 34.9-hectare VMMC property would be "sold" for commercial development had been laid by making the transfer of the hospital and on the blogs kept by some of the veterans.

Quezon City Mayor Feliciano Belmonte confirmed City Hall's plan to "transform" the VMMC...but maintained that such swapped retirees like Liparde need not worry.

"The residential area will be built where the golf course is," Belmonte said, referring to the 18-hole course sprawled around VMMC's cluster of buildings.

"But we have no intention of changing the hospital," Belmonte explained to an inquirer interview on April 9.

Best economic use

It's a matter of "putting the best economic use" for property the "first have been lying fallow," Belmonte said, referring to plans to restate the VMMC property—as well as the adjoining 300-ha North Triangle and 140-ha East Triangle areas—into a "commercial business district."

The envisioned urban makeover would cover a total of 220 ha.

"The presence of the DENRoma (mall) has already transformed North Triangle, and we will continue to put the best economic use for (those areas)," Belmonte said.

In the case of the VMMC, City Hall plans to convert the 37-ha golf course into a row of condominium. "Gains" to be made from the conversion will go to the VMMC, Belmonte said.

Together with Vice President Noli De Castro, Belmonte co-heads the Urban Triangle Development Commission created by President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo to speed up the transformation of the VMMC and the North and East Triangle areas into a "mixed use urban community."

The VMMC was constructed in 1955 by virtue of a US Congressional law providing for the medical needs of World War II veterans. In 1961, a presidential proclamation transferred ownership of the property from the National Housing Authority to the VMMC administration.

Over the last five decades, the facility has extended services not only to veterans but also to their dependents, as well as a limited number of Philhealth (Philippine Health Insurance Corp.) members. From 2001 to 2003, in presidential suite served as the detention quarters of deposed President Joseph Estrada as he faced trial for plunder.)

No objections

Former Defense Secretary Norberto Ginez, president of the Canadian Association of Veterans, said he didn't mind "retirement taking" the golf course if it could add to the veterans' pension fund and if the hospital would stay.

"The veterans should realize that (release of their) pension funds is dependent on the availability of funds. If there are no funds for the purpose of benefits, the releases of it is delayed," Ginez said in a phone interview. "Before that there should be a source of funds for the pensioners."

Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, himself a veteran who had served in the Armed Forces of the Philippines for more than 28 years, agreed.

"If it's going to generate more funds, why not?" the senator said in an interview. Biazon proposed, though, that the revenues should be used for the construction of similar hospitals for veterans living in other parts of the country.

Biazon also stressed that the present VMMC should stay "where it is."

Regional medical centers

Retired Brig. Gen. Rodigo Gerong, president of the Alliance for the Amelioration of Veterans and Former Policemen and Retirees, said the revenues could also be used to build regional medical centers in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao.

"The pensionis (heirs) of veterans to have regional medical centers has remained a problem. And this development could probably make this dream come true," Gerong said during a Senate hearing on March 19.

The hearing, called by the Senate defense committee chaired by Biazon, sought to assess the impact Quezon City Hall's development plans would have on the VMMC.

The Senate majority was launched after pending demand report in early March that the VMMC property was up for sale.

Rumors

A group of VMMC employees, reportedly joined by some of the patients, staged a lightning rally shortly after "Bureau Instruments" were seen touring the hospital and asking photos of the property, according to informants reaching Bulatao.

Curiously, Belmonte denied any knowledge of any Korean investor interested in the VMMC development at this point.

Rumors that the property was up for "demolition" had since spread.

But according to Defense Undersecretary Francis Carolina, these rumors were merely started by some VMMC employees who live in shanties in the adjacent North Triangle area, on fears that their homes will be demolished very soon.

Carolina, who also serves as acting administrator of the Philippine Veterans Affairs Office (PVAO) which oversees the VMMC, said the government had no intention to sell the hospital property or segment.

"It's not just a matter of us not allowing it; it's against the law. The law provides that the government should take care of the veterans," he said in an interview.

The undersecretary clarified, however, that the Department of National Defense and the Quezon City Government were still holding talks regarding the latter's development plans and have not agreed on anything quotable.

3 DND conditions

The DND had been invited to be part of the venture, Carolina said, but Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro set three conditions:

That the plan should result in a more modern, better equipped VMMC; that if VMMC is to be relocated, it should still be within the Zabbian area eyed for development; and that there must be "reasonable sharing of the revenues."

"If that is acceptable to the Quezon City government, then why not?" Carolina said.

He disclosed that the VMMC golf course currently generates a monthly revenue of P500,000. The money mainly goes to the maintenance budget for the entire VMMC property.

If developed into a high-end residential area or upgraded to a first-class golf course, it could earn up to P5M million a month, Carolina said.

That amount could be used to maintain a really "modern hospital," he said.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

OPINION

Focus on consequences

EDITORIAL

THE PLAN BY SOME SENATORS TO FILE A MOTION before the Supreme Court asking three justices to inhibit themselves from the Neri case is more trouble than it's worth; it must be set aside. We can understand the sense of frustration that led to the plan, and the tactical considerations that seem to justify it, but we also fear that the motion will be seriously counterproductive.

We wish to make it clear: The Senate is absolutely right to file a motion for reconsideration on the Supreme Court decision in Neri v. Senate Committees. The Court must reverse itself on the threshold issue of executive privilege, because the 9-6 decision dangerously expands the scope of this implied privilege and effectively undercuts the 14-0 ruling in Senate v. Ermita. The public should continue to make its sentiments over the dangerous implications of the Neri decision known; the decision weakens a fundamental principle of republican democracy, that government must be based on the informed consent of the governed.

Not least, we share some of the senators' apprehensions. As we argued last week, Justice Arturo Brion's participation in the majority vote was particularly unfortunate. He did not side just in the end arguments (in the reasoning in his own separate opinion reminds us); he was a Cabinet colleague of the petitioner, former Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri, only days before voting on the case (as the emphasis in his opinion makes quite clear).

But it is one thing for senators to air their apprehensions; it is another for the Senate to formalize them by filing a corollary motion to inhibit. That immediately politicizes the justices, raises them as partisan, in a manner that does not meet the ends of justice or the objectives of the appeal. Unless, of course, Sen. Francis Pangilinan et al. now subscribe to the scorched-earth strategy used by the very administration they criticize.

Sen. Richard Gordon makes a useful distinction. "There is no point in challenging partiality because the Supreme Court is a very important body in our country. It is the court of last resort. When you start doing that, you are in effect eroding the confidence of our people in our Supreme Court. It can very well be said of the Senate that it has become partisan; sometimes the hearings have run astray of [their] original task."

To be sure, this is not the complete picture. Nothing erodes the people's confidence in the court of last resort like an unjust decision. And a decision becomes unjust not because of the intentions that move the justices to rule one way or another but because of the ruling's very real consequences.

The majority in Neri v. Senate Committees may have set out simply to strike a balance between an assertive Executive and a combustible Senate. But the consequences of the decision have been most severe: The ruling dangerously swung the pendulum in favor of an Executive that has made a virtue out of secrecy (and feels out of those who demand transparency and accountability).

Consider the effrontery of Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita waving a versified legal opinion about, and declaring that the Executive will no longer honor the Senate's summonses because (he said) the Court had ruled all Senate hearings unconstitutionally invalid. Supreme Court justices may not have expected the President's free silver ego to make such a crassly self-interested and grossly erroneous statement, but we dare say they were not surprised. A majority of the justices who ruled in favor of Neri (let your ruled against Ermita only two years ago.

While the public will welcome a decision by Brion to inhibit himself, out of delicadeza, in the deliberations and the actual vote on the motion for reconsideration, the better strategy from both the legal and political point of view is to focus on the ruling's terrible consequences.

Yet, the judiciary must be insulated from political considerations and popular passions; there is a reason why it was designed as the side non-political branch of government. But the life of the law remains that of experience. Decisions cannot be ripped out of their context.

The context of the Neri case, reconsidered, includes its baneful consequences. The arguments in the nation's best interests can be found in them, even, or especially, by the justices who voted with the majority.

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A hocked future

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

"SIR, IS A COUNTRY SERVED BY RUSTIC farmers, ruled by Filipino workings in 150 countries, which could exceed $15.7 billion before they run a tress. Thus, we've ignored warnings by the Asian Development Bank, among others, that an unattended "brain drain" could bankrupt the Philippines.

The first "turbulent forces" arrived? The question "unsettled" scientists, who gathered earlier at a University of the Philippines conference in Baguio.

The British Royal Society named the "brain drain" tag in the early 1960s. That described the cascade of highly skilled workers into the United States and Canada.

One five overseas foreign workers left in the early 1970s. That ballooned continues today. This has imbedded doom our stock of nurses and health care personnel, from pediatricians to obstetricians and cardiologists.

What is new, the Baguio meet noted, were emerging shortages of geologists, pilots, computer specialists, accountants, air controllers, etc. The country took from periodic tea shortages. But few become plant breeders or agriculturists or scientists.

"We haven't got the worst bodies," Bohlen Undersecretary Gaetano Sumal groused. "We invested P1.5 billion for Baguio (Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration) but we don't have meteorologists and climatologists [who'll handle the new equipment after undergoing a government financed graduate program]."

Free-tuition aid for scholarships provided by the President is a P4-billion engineering and technology development fund, reports Inquirer's Vincent Cabreza.

"We can't find suited because of the absence of experts," pilipino Star Ngayon Pilabar reveals. Mayor Binay handed scholarships to build a pool of specialists. But few enter the geology graduate program. And Philippine Science High School graduates usually "believe the means" set by other schools abroad.

"Recent growth in many parts of Asia has been so great that it rapidly transformed the types of skills needed," the Economist notes. "Universities in Asia have been unable to keep up." Education deficits of two decades ago, were in our most lucrative graduates with few skills, take-it-to-hell nurses.

India must hire an additional 10,000 pilots in 17 years. Asian airlines are poaching pilots, including some from Brazil and the Philippines. China needs 100,000 more doctors. Hong Kong and Shanghai encourage bar accountants and lawyers to open labs.

Nurse colonies are dominated by Filipinos, in Lesotho or Bangladesh maids. But this is a globalizing world. And the premium is on brains and skills. The 1803 Louisiana Purchase cost, carved into the former of Liberty, should be blue-penciled today to read: "Give me your huddled masses yearning to breathe free"—provided they have PhDs.

In "The Brain Drain: Old Myths, New Realities," Mario Cervantes and Dominique Guellec debunk the claim that the "brain drain" produces much poorer only poor countries, a.k.a "developing and transition economies." That's out.

Pioneer, Canada, Australia and New Zealand crafted policies to attract skilled workers. Through a "green card" scheme, Germany invented 20,000 information technology specialists, mainly from eastern Europe. Over 900,000 professionals migrated to the US after Congress lifted the visa cap on skilled workers.

A quarter of H-1B visa holders were "previously students enrolled at US universities," Cervantes and Guellec found. The policy pays off. Nations like Taiwan and Korea have lured their US nationals or countries of global high-tech companies, such as Intel in Chile, and cobs successful start-ups."

The 2008 Chemistry Nobel laureate Aaron Ciechanover at the latest to ask the 2,000 or so Filipinos who migrate daily to stay. "Educated Filipinos tend to have the country to serve for export or their country's expense," he said. Help fuel the country out.

Some do. In Iquito, Bohol, Filipino pioneers Christopher and Iris Veneta Bersola run the internationally acclaimed Research Center for Tarsiers and Primates. They teach science and math to young kids while continuing to publish their studies on "highly flexible polyjaws and white noise sounds" in conservation and journals. Molecular biologist founder Lita designed meal livelihood projects for indigent Aetas, while continuing research scene of the Philippines' 11 banned Socotras.

But such appeals often go unheeded. Biologist academy of Social Sciences man two-thirds of the next one million Chinese who've graduated since the 1980s haven't returned. "China suffers from the world's most severe brain drain," the BBC notes. The International Organization for Migration estimates that 300, 000 of their professionals work in Europe and North America.

Lack of jobs, shoddy governance and income disparities drive workers to migrate. "The harsh reality is [that] countries...Korea, Poland, Taipei and India—succeeded in reversing the 'scientific diaspora'." These spurred their economies and invented modernization.

Half of locators to Taipei's Science Park are ex-multibillionaires. Singapore poured $7.3 billion into Biopolis, a science city that, with state-of-the art equipment, attracts biomedical brains from all over the world.

The Baguio delegation cobbled a document, called "Beyond 2008: A Science and Technology Agenda for the Filipino People," it builds on invaluable work by people like the Bersolos and Oyo.

But do our leaders listen? The Senate will conduct another probe, we're told. That may be necessary, but it does not exude confidence with a tin bulwer former which. Alfred Einstein once said, "science soooooooogh."

(E-mail: jmercado@pinoy.com)

Questions, answers

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

ERNESTO E. MACHITO HAS AN INTERESTing letter to our readers' section last Monday. In three directions, he said, people need to learn answers to several questions. And he proceeds to enumerate them, with the first paragraph suggesting their answers.

"Have we not been in a constitutional crisis since President Macapagal-Arroyo lied to the people in 2004? Did she not stop the news in the Bataan to impeach her? Isn't dubious leadership the cause of the economic-political instability which has sent the prices of basic goods soaring and led to attacks from hunger and malnutrition to worst years?

"The question we cannot avoid asking," he concludes, "is this: Is the event the crisis is not resolved, will it be interpreted as a mere overnight or as a declaration of siege?"

Machito's letter is typical of the overwhelming number of letters that find their way into the Inquirer's readers' section these days. It is one of the more restrained, with some of the other letters positively simmering with venom. Which brings me to add one more question to those Machito asks. Faced with this situation, what do we do about it?

What we have today is a situation that, with a few variations, is pretty much the one we had during Marcos' time. Chief of the elements then is that we also have an illegitimate ruler who is making people sick by her presence—in this case completely literally. Marcos was desperate then, GMA is desperate now. Mr have a ruler today who is evidently disliked (the recent news just-in for birthday) before the election, let alone and everyone is withdrawn it with her, for fear of spoiling class. At least Marcos at least could count on the Bicutan to embrace Sept. 11, the anniversary of martial law, a holiday, as "Thanksgiving Day." In GMA's case, well, I hadn't suspect her spin doctors had much to do with making her birthday last longer than a one-week. They must have figured (rightly) that it would be an unfair provocation to ask Filipinos to be glad that hour was born.

Marcos had the powers in his pocket. GMA has the courts in her pocket. There's a win-win-win-win similarity as well, which is that there were Cheville Trobiaches, Cecille Morbes Poltes, and Vicente Abad Santos to challenge Marcos' vicious measures then, and there is Bayanis Pimo-and, until recently, many of the justices to challenge GMA's vicious measures now in both cases, the forces of Good were not strong enough to prevail in the end—at least not repeatedly bypassed Trobiaches as chief justice notwithstanding that he was the most senior. That was at least so in the courts of law, because the first did vanquish the second in a court before that the Supreme Court, which GMA has more than packed with lackeys, in public opinion, the court of the people's will. That court Marcos never managed to win over, however desperately he wanted it.

There is one variation between then and now that is not altogether minor. Marcos then was fighting tooth and nail with the Catholic Church. GMA now is jumping locker with the bishops and archbishops. Then there was Jaime Cardinal Sin to raise his prelate's staff like Moses and bid the warm people to mobilize their to get through to the other side. Now there are the seven-score episcopacy in religious robes bidding the crowds of Prayer past to enable to door to get through to them. Like Chief Justice Puno, Archbishop Angel Lagdameo is a dazzling light in a sea of darkness, but he has to reckon with the sea of darkness anyway.

In a time of crisis, we have a ruler we cannot trust. In a time of opportunity, we have people who must rely on and the citizenry to do so. Hold. In a time of intersection, we have a Church that means only to drum its flock. What do we do for the love of this?

One is tempted to say the only solution is to take the law into our own hands, and I presume, ally engaged we do exist to the temptation. The principle of not taking the law into one's hands presupposes the existence of the institutional, legal, and moral institutions of society guarantee that the law holds sway at all times—or more than low justice and decency, and if not at all times, at least most of the time. Yes, it that the common good is higher than the individual good and society is ordered.

But what if the political, legal, and moral institutions, such as they were during martial law and such as they are today, do not fortify the political, legal, and moral foundations of the community but gnaw at them like termites? And what if the individual taking the law into his hands becomes the entire community itself taking the law into its own hands? Then the phrase really becomes "the citizens putting the law right back where it belongs, which is their hands."

The letter, the blogs, the surveys, the forums, the rallies, the resonance of cries and clamors all carry one message, the same message we heard in Marcos' time. Sovereignty is government and the citizens are the citizens, and we're the ruins shall save. During Marcos' time, the citizens responded in the complete way to a ruler and ruler by creating their own "parliament of the streets," an alternative government that became the voice of the people. I don't know why we can't do the same thing today, create a parliament of the streets, however "street" may mean between physical and virtual, a direct expression of the people's will that can eventually trample the allegiance even of the armed forces of the country. The chain of command itself is premised on the chain of nature, not the chain of greed, the chain of rape, not the chain of theft.

I know it sounds like a pipe dream at this point. But pipe dreams have always had a way of realizing real nightmares.

Law schools outside Manila vying for top ranking

THE QUERY HAS BEEN RAISED IN THE MEDIA as to why there has been very little outcry about the recent Supreme Court ruling that sustained, through a 9-6 majority vote, GMA's bureaucratic Sorsi rescission of executive privilege in refusing to appear a second time to the Senate hearing. A "walk for truth" the other day by a few senators, some religious and non-artistes flooded Manila's streets but just a few dozen people. The question now is, is the public so indifferent to what's being deemed as the curtailing of the Senate's right to investigate deals and scams?

I don't read it as "indifference." The reaction from the newspaper's many letters is palpable especially in the metropolis, but there are many reasons for the public's "indifference" to the SC ruling. One is that after over 30 hours of hearings supposedly in aid of legislation, not a single legislative bill was ever formulated, many people believe the problem of how to assure dismissers of having enough time in the running months and how to cope with the creeping inflation, rather than fathoming the truth about the 27% 1000 deal.

* * *

I was quite elated over the event(s) for reasons for a number of reasons. One is that third placer Francis Jr. Leon Guzmán of the Ateneo College of Law is the granddaughter of a good friend of mine, Maria Lourdes "Lulu" Sereno de Leon, a cousin of Gina de Venecia's mother, Marina Sereno Devera. I also note that it was not just the usual top schools like Ateneo, UP and San Beda that produced examinees in the July '08, first ever bi-annual bar exam, but also Mother Manila. These included San Carlos University and Bio University of Cebu, the University of Nueva Caceres in Naga City and the Siliman de Dumaguete as well as San Sebastian College in Manila. This means that law colleges outside Manila are good and producing top quality graduates.

Moreover, I note that of the 12 topnotchers from first to 7th place and two for the 10th place), nine are women. This proves what various school deans have been saying: that women in particular are topping the class because they're disciplined and highly focused on their studies—traits elements of success.

* * *

In a call to me, Mona de Leon said the reason Francis didn't end up No. 1 in the bar exams was probably because she got distracted when she got a boyfriend during the review. The school instead of Trauma, daughter of lawyer Rosillo "Jack" Mandol and Carlene de Leon Mandol of Sacred Heart. Francis for math grade throughout high school is St. Scholastica's academy of Sacred City, with highest honors. All English Literature, Miriam University, 2003, magna cum laude. Miriam Law School, 2007, graduating with honors and bachelor's degree in political law. Francis, only 25, whose primary legal interest is public international law, specifically refugee law and Philippine migrant workers' issues, plans to work for her master's at Columbia University Law School in New York City. Her plans to become more involved in our migrant workers' problems loom.

* * *

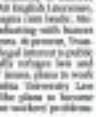
During the dinner that Ambassador to Costa Rica Wilfredo Garcia hosted for us, the managers of the Japanese restaurant at Marriott Hotel proudly presented to us its sous chef, Marvelo Mabunay of Cebu. He had trained in Singapore and Hawaii before working in Cairo over the past three years. He learned from Mabunay that of the 3,000 or so Filipinos (documented workers) in Egypt, a big number build even expensible positions. Many work as chefs in Cairo's leading hotels, which are all clustered around the banks of the Nile. These include Mabunay's assistant sushi chef at Marriott, Ranch Cuevas; Emil Mesa, pastry chef at Aqua Restaurant in the Four Seasons Hotel; Leodelio Sol, supervisor of the Spice Restaurant in Four Seasons; Antonio Lapiz, sous chef of The Chevrier Japanese restaurant of Fairmont Hotel; Ronald Bernal, "grand saucier," executive chef of the Hotel Intercontinental Heliopolis; and Aurelius Silicia, topnotch chef of the Sheraton Cairo. There's also Chery Silvera, wife's executive secretary to the GM of Fairmont Hotel Nile as well as a lady dermatologist working in Maadi, where most diplomatic missions in Cairo are located.

Of course, for every story of success of Pinoys, there are also sad stories of Filipino domestic helpers who are abused and ill-treated by their Egyptian employers. But we cannot and second secretary Charmaine Bonavia disagrees. If, assured us that the embassy is always open to meditation and rescue missions.

* * *

Before we said goodbye to Cairo, the ambassador made a point to have embassy driver Lincoln Castro bring us to the site in Matariya in the suburb of Heliopolis where the Holy Family was supposed to have stayed while traveling on the current to and during their celebrated flight from Herod. At the site can be seen the guarded spreading trunk of what once must have been a giant sycamore tree, which tradition says gave temporary shelter to Mary, Joseph and baby Jesus. Also preserved is the blind the ancient tree trunk stands a big tree dating from 1672 which is said to have sprung from the old tree. The site now a pilgrimage destination for Christian tourists, to only one of the many places in Egypt that Coptic Christians have nominated or celebrate of their deep religiosity in the midst of a predominantly Arab and Islamic world, it's fascinating to find so many places of worship for Christians.

The world in a grain of rice



HUMAN FACE

Ma. Carmen P. Reyes

THE FIRST LINES OF WILLIAM BLAKE'S "Auguries of Innocence" play in my head when I think of the so-called rice crisis. The word "rice" becomes the figure of the universe. The rice grain, symbol of a grain of rice, and heaven in a wild flower."

* * *

Many rice crisis memories age (when fancy rice was P20 a kilo), I wrote a piece on rice that a number of readers responded to because it brought back memories of their childhood. This season, details of rice in all its glory, the many names of rice in the four Philippine languages that I know and the images they bring forth.

Rice is a many-splendored thing.

Rice is a many-splendored image of the past, of one's childhood, of memories and flavors and times of plenty, of peasants and revolutions, of the simple folk, the countryside and its scenery, of hunger, hope and humanity. We wonder America's Thanksgiving Day feast without the cornucopia of rice.

Rice is a particular thing—food, animal, plant, product. Subtle an important place in the local culture, it is given many names. These names number in the dozens in the Tagalog region, and engage in trifle, the small products. They could relate to the quality, consistency, strength, age, source.

We are a rice-devouring people and we have many names for rice. We use many names to refer to rice at various stages of growth, in terms of and cultivation when cooked.

We don't simply say uncooked rice, cooked rice or rice porridge. We detail say unmilled rice or milled rice. We have specific terms for all of these stages of rice, whether it is in the field or in the pot. We don't need adjectives. One word is enough.

Here is a list of remembered words (Filipino, Bilingwistic, literal, etc.) that refer to rice. As you read the list, think of the many images and memories that each distinct language. Think of your own life. What do you remember? Images of plenty?

Palay (Tagalog)—the rice plant; palay, bulay —unmilled or unhusked rice grains; palay, pasi— unmilled rice; palay, binhi—rice seeds; palay, punla—rice seedlings; palay, tanim—rice plants; palay, uhay—rice seedlings; palay, usbong—budding rice; palay, utong—unmilled rice; utong, dahon—toasted rice at the bottom of the pot; la, pan—rice porridge; pinipig—flattened rice grains; pulot—sticky rice; puto—rice cake; tuwâ—rice drink; tsokolate—rice flour, sugar and cocoa (chocolate) mixed with boiling rice and fed to infant; bugas kapas—rice seed.

In Iloko, where I grew up and which is supposed to be the richest in the number of words and even more precise words to refer to "rice farms." As a half Ilokano, I also know a few rice words used in the Ilocos region.

Many rice memories are with pesky, but Tinggian don't use it is to refer to unhusked grains found in milled rice. The word for the grain unhusked grains is pasi (pronounce it as-si).

There are hundreds of names for different rice strains in the Philippines, many found in the Tagalog region, hazy in Bicol, valley-valley in Visayas, prima in Bicol, etc.

Contrast to one's mind and mood partner. I have I'm Filipino Ilokano in taste because if you spread one variety of Ilocano rice, you've spread the rice-consumption habits to me. I'll come in on the letter, and I can make a mean pinakbet.

The rice crisis has brought to the fore the importance of rice. Filipinos can't eat rice. Rice is a rice, rice is rice, more importantly, in our culture. We are what we eat, the saying goes. Our bodies are nourished by its carbohydrates and vitamins. In others the price of rice suddenly shoots up, the economy is in trouble. There is no rice in the country, there is something very culturally upsetting.

"Marunong ka pang bigas na kahalintulad" (You're going to have to eat a lot of rice yet) is a local expression that means one has a long way to go. Rice will get you there yet, to other words, that how if there is not enough of it? During the dark days of martial law, GMA would regularly brag in the evening, "Dapat hindi kumiko 'ng "Bigas hindi nasa." The less the city where newsprints became headlines.

At the base of the socio-economic triangle are often found rice. "Kulot pumiki mani ning ay bigas..." There's no wealth politics there, you can't translate it into English. Only a special data would make it for home. Rice is then on the list. Forget the rice for the environment, it's rice for the menu on their mother list. But for those who have nothing, rice, and only rice, is what will make them survive the day.

One anthropologist can one hour that I heard a long time ago from Father Jesus Arcilla with a sense of humor was: "Hindi na kami magsasaka, magsasaka na." (We're no longer rice farmers, we're now rice stock dealers.) That's one guy that gets totally lost in the translation. The punch lines are the sound of a Filipino sound. Forget it if you don't understand Filipino.

The letter "r" in "magsasaka" might as well be a lot zero, meaning utterly empty inside. Where is all that rice going?

There are many names of troubled rice yields, rice shortages and vanishing rice varieties. One would blame season land conversion, chemical poisoning of the soil, wrong government agricultural policies, rice importations, disasters and multinational seeds who play god. Name it.

Even we heard of SRP. I attended a conference on SRP or System of Rice Intensification (SRI) in Los Baños. The concept is not just a rice variety, because it is not set in stone. It has to be tested and adjusted to particular conditions. If practiced skillfully, SRI could increase rice produce by 50 to 100 percent, and in cases where initial production was low, the increase could go as high as 200 to 300 percent.

Oh experts, please come forward!

Send feedback to ecarmenpreyes@yahoo.com.ph

Senate the victim of a design flaw

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

LET ME BEGIN BY STATING THAT I BELIEVE our senate was designed to be a continuing body and it's fair for the Senate to assume it's a continuing body. But the Senate is not a body in which the constituents of the framers of our present Constitution. Let's review how it came to be viewed as a continuing body.

On the second Tuesday of November 1941, we elected a Senate on a national basis for the first time.

As the 1st Congress convened to fix the geography of Manuel Roxas: "The Filipino electorate did elect the Senate on a national basis, and the framers of the bicameral system with a House of Representatives whose membership would be elected for a four-year term and a Senate with 24 senators to be elected at large throughout the country, 8 of whom would come up for election every two years. Since 24 senators had to be chosen for the first Senate, however, it meant that the 8 senators who received the highest number of votes would hold office for six years, the next 8 would hold office for four years, and the last 8 for two years. Thus, had World War II not intervened, there would have been an election in 1942 for 8 senators. Another election should have been held in November 1944 not only for 8 senators to fill the seats of the outgoing members of the House as well as a President." Once named not, no 1943 election was held and national elections only took place in May 1946.)

In that election, all 24 senators elected came from the Nacionalista Party. What's interesting is that they comprised a fairly geographically balanced slate, representing the significant voting population of the time. Geographical balance was also represented in the Senate and was reproduced in the immediate post-1935 to 1969. In 1986, both the Marcos and Aquino sides broke with tradition, and the tradition of a fourth-fourth-fourth was abandoned, it seems, for good.

Returning to the results of that first national senatorial election, there were 13 from Luzon (Isidro Ariaza, Daniel Maramba, Quintin Paredes, Jose Quirino and Vicente Sotto)from from the Visayas: Antonio de las Alas and Claro M. Recto; from Mindanao: Domingo Imperial and Vicente Madrigal from Bicol: Ramon Fernandez from Manila; Nicolas Buendia from Bulacan; Eulogio Rodriguez from Nueva Ecija; and Guillermo Tolentino from Cavite.

From the Visayas, there were nine: Pedro Hernani, Esteban de la Rama, Arsenio Torres and Jose Ma. del Mar from Cebu; Norberto Romualdez and Vicente Fragante of Leyte; Carlos P. Garcia of Bohol; Manuel Roxas of Capiz; Rafael Martinez of Iloilo.

From Mindanao, which was first relatively less populated, came two: Ruperto Montinola of Lanao and Jose Clarence of Misamis Oriental, a Muslim and a Christian, respectively.

Benigno Aquino of Tarlac was slated to be speaker of the House of Representatives.

But oddly enough, instead of basing their terms on the percentage of votes received, the senators decided their terms would be determined by drawing lots. For example, Jose Yulo, who came in fourth after Sotto, Recto and Paredes, and who was due to serve a four-year term, drew a six-year term. Basically, the short end of the stick. He became one of the senators who ended up with two-year terms, and so never got to sit in the Senate because of the war.

Our second observing senators on a staggered basis was the development of the Senate electorate as a referendum on strong administrations. The only national election that, without during a president's term, was for the Senate. If the mid-term went to the opposition, it was a sure sign that the people, they were in bad odor with the people. This was particularly the case in 1950 (Quirino's mid-1971 (Marcos), when the opposition swept the Senate, resulting in a proclamation of the incumbent marshal-only by the 2007 senatorial polls. Save my election years

scenario for the PCIJ, "An abnormal return to normalcy" at http://pcij.org/i-report/2007/2007-polls-post-mortem.html).

Despite such huge opportunities, the draft of the two-party system, and the changes in congressional and the president's term to allow an longer candidate, the mid-term tradition is so strong it has survived and remains in potency, politically.

Another result of the staggered terms of senators was the development of the idea that the Senate, in contrast to the House, is a "continuing body." Indeed Chief Justice Artemio Panganiban in his column "Senate is a Continuing Body" (Inquirer, "Treasures to Attack" (July 31, 1950), the Supreme Court stated that the Senate was a continuing body. Panganiban quoted Justice Antonio Carpio's explanation as to why this may have been so in the Supreme Court decision in Neri vs. Senate: "Logically, however, that 'Senatorial' was decided under the 1935 Constitution when only eight of the 24 senators were elected every two years. The first 12 senators elected in 1987 under the present Constitution, however, will serve a full six years, and so will the 12 senators who ended up with two years' terms, and so never got to sit in the Senate because of the war.

Our second observing senators on a staggered basis was the development of the Senate electorate as a referendum on strong administrations. The only national election that, without during a president's term, was for the Senate. If the mid-term went to the opposition, it was a sure sign that the people, they were in bad odor with the people. This was particularly the case in 1950 (Quirino's mid-1971 (Marcos), when the opposition swept the Senate, resulting in a proclamation of the incumbent marshal-only by the 2007 senatorial polls. Save my election years

Real change

AS A STUDENT IN A RESTLESS UNIVERSITY, I AM CONSTANTLY exposed and encouraged to be aware of the problems plaguing our society. We are urged not only by our professors but also by our fellow students to take a stand. In a newsletter for a local newspaper, though, it is my duty to report the news in a fair and impartial manner. And that often brings me to a dilemma.

I have been often asked about my opinion and stand on the present political turmoil in our country. Being a member of a youth and a journalist, I often have difficulty answering people who expect me to give an answer that fits their expectations or biases. Recently on a radio talk show, I was asked by the anchor what I propose as the fourth-coup attempt to help solve the problems. Maybe insult to the dismay of my peers, I took the middle ground and resisted to color instead of rash actions and protests.

Maybe it's my exposure to and experience of the real world and society that make me think the way I do. I have been fortunate that I have had a glimpse of the struggle and common situation. I have watched with anger over the arrogance and the public officials. I have felt the euphoria of expressing my indignation through speeches and activities.

But after going through all of these, what have I learned? I have learned not to impose on others my ideals and beliefs. I have learned to respect the opinions of others. I have learned not to act on impulse or make irrational decisions because of anger. Most of all, I have learned how to live in the real world.

We cannot continue to dream and talk of "what ifs" and "what could have been." What we need is to face our country's illnesses and address our people's problems. We cannot just dream of a better Philippines and leave it as that. We have to work today for a better tomorrow.

So, what can the youth do now to help save our country? As with any solutions, knowledge is the key to it. Informed youth can make a difference in different fields of endeavor and interest. It is not enough to voice out one's sentiments. The youth has the responsibility to educate and inform their fellows about what is happening in our country. It is our duty to provide people with knowledge that will help them make the right decisions. An informed decision will create a force to be reckoned with. There is a lot room for student publications and student organizations to take the lead in holding forums and discussions so the youth can truly understand the issues. Only with proper education will the chains of apathy be broken. And once the youth is awakened to the realization of our country's plight, only then can they be truly empowered.

The question for me is also channeling to speak out. Such is my dilemma that oftentimes I have difficulty distinguishing my role as a youth and as a journalist. As a youth, I am inclined to clamor for change. As a journalist, I have to rely on facts and evidence before coming to conclusions. Maybe it is this dilemma that has helped begin seeing things from both sides.

The media, as a crucial part of our society, should ensure that the truth always prevails. It is our role as journalists to watch over the integrity of government officials. It is our duty to tell the Filipino people about government's and society's wrongdoings. But we have to be careful and serve as constant reminders to government officials not to betray the cause that the people have given them. It is our responsibility to expose graft and corruption on any level of government to the people. But it is not enough to just expose them; the media must make sure that such corrupt practices never happen again by keeping a watchful eye.

The issues that we have to face are not only political faultlings on government projects, press conferences, public hearings, court cases, and sessions of Congress or the provincial boards or municipal councils. For only if the people close interest in government business and the decisions and practices of officials will people power prevail.

It is time that we realize that change is in us. We cannot change a regime with another regime how or repeating the mistakes of the previous one. What we need is not just a change of men but a change in men.

We only have ourselves to blame for our country's woes. Society at large is partly to blame for our country's unfortunes. A culture of corruption pervades not only in government but in our society as well. When we continue to allow public officials to steal, lie and cheat, we give them the power to betray our nation. When we allow society to ignore in our ills instead of addressing them, we contribute in perpetuating the problem. What we need is not just a change of officials, government, or constitution. What we need is real change in ourselves and in our society.

Alec Francis A. Santos, 21, is a student of the Ateneo de Naga University and a senior news writer of YouBlood, a Naga City newspaper.

YOUNG BLOOD

Alec Francis A. Santos

My worry is from what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? The recent vote-counting issue the [illegible] and humor. —Ed.

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

Send your contributions by e-mail to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph together with your address, age and the school, course and your year/s enrolled in or, if employed, the position you're holding and the company you work with. Contributions to Youngblood should not have been previously published.

THEY SAID

Not free to choose

"The communities in Bondoc Peninsula and Bicolano have been impoverished by oppressive and exploitative landlords, and the 1950s have not done anything to change our lives for the better. But why did they have to kill our husbands after deciding to choose to engage with the government and use the law to assert our rights? Are we not free to make these choices?"

—Widows of peasant leaders slain in Bondoc peninsula rebels

Nothing to buy

"What gold would it do even if we have enough money for the imports if there is nothing left to buy? Let our farmers produce enough for consumer's use instead of relying on imports instead of self-sufficiency is one of the reasons we are facing an impending rice shortage."

—Isabela Bishop, president of the National Rice Farmers Council

A picture that says it all

THE PICTURE OF BISH. JUAN Povar Bacolo with three Catholic bishops gracing the ground-breaking rites of a Las Vegas, style casino and tourism complex by the Manila Bay says it all. No th nuds or bars.

In the past two months, the Catholic bishops' Conference of the Philippines has received not a few flailings from disillusioned and angry citizens for statements and actions of a number of its members. These statements and actions have given the impression that some bishops are performing a dangerous **ordus** or a dirty dance with an ex-parte suspicious and morally bankrupt leader. The leader seems to more than like the company of bishops and religious leaders. She has grant a number of times to visit the Pope and pledge loyalty to the Catholic Church to which she belongs. She has given herself the title, "Servin daughter of the Church." But **what** is the Church? Who is the Church?

If statements, actions and pictures are indicators or clues, these have in the past months helped in **clarifying** the simple but intricate composition of the Church. The Catholic Church is 99.9 percent lay people and less than 1 percent priests, bishops and religious. The 1 percent lead and serve the 99.9 percent. Hence, regardless of numbers, those who provide the spiritual and moral leadership and who at the same time occupy the position of power and authority draw by savvy much weight and influence. Thus, what the hierarchy say and do has and will always have great impact.

Yet, if we further break down the 1 percent, we see an even smaller group within. This small group is even more powerful. However, in the past months, as the Von Leonin exposé unfolded, when a number of bishops, through word and deed, expressed support for this highly suspect and morally bankrupt leader, many among concerned and well-meaning Catholic laity just decided to think, pray and discern for themselves.

Associate Mamotes and a number of writers have applied the word "irrelevant" to the bishops. Some years ago, I was afraid not only that the bishops would become irrelevant but also that the institution that they represent would be irrelevant.

LETTERS

on the whole, in-

given how both to moral and spiritual issues and influences on people.

If pictures can speak, what does the particular picture of bishops flanking now, nothing really and the a nod. What picture or images have the same impact, or do not have any impact at all, that says to the Filipino **symbols no longer speak, they are** more than irrelevant, they are dead.

Who is Senator Enrile? What does he symbolize? Who are the three bishops? What do they symbolize?

As far as the senator is concerned, this much I can say: he represents only himself and his narrow interests.

As far as the bishops are concerned, I still have some hope and faith left that they can do more than is narrow and selfish. They can still save what little life is left in the bi's symbol.

—FR. ROBERTO REYES

A credible institution for good governance

IN 1998, KOFI ANNAN, THEN secretary general of the United Nations said, "Good governance is perhaps the single most important factor in eradicating poverty and promoting development."

In the Philippines, several reconstructions in good governance have been proposed by different sectors. But one of the major constants in realizing good governance is the lack of an institution that can serve as the living symbol of the nation as well as of the state and unity of the people. This institution should have the moral authority to govern, enjoy the allegiance of the people. Then it can play as a countervailing influence to political power and for exercise and perpetuation of corruption. The absence of this institution can be traced to our colonial past and the colonial mentality which remains prevalent to this day.

There have been personalities like former President Corazon Aquino and the late Jaime Cardinal Sin who have earned the moral authority to lead the Filipino people. The former president, who became a popular political figure after the death of Sen. Ninoy Aquino and restored at least 23 international awards for leadership, international understanding, peace and freedom, continues to preside in her own right that authority in promoting good governance. Her continual has earned her the respect of all political figures both from the administration and opposition camps. This respect has become more pronounced in their show of concern for her health condition. It is for this reason that Malacañang appealed to administration politicians to "cap-tulate" on the condition of the former president who has been calling for President Macapagal-Arroyo's resignation since 2005.

While we all Filipinos wish and pray for the former president's recovery, we are confronted with the challenge to establish an institution that has the moral authority to govern.

—GORDON EDDERU,
ekodawn@yahoo.com

THE NEW Subic-Clark Tarlac Expressway

Exact SCT project cost is only P6.5B, not P7.18B

WE WRITE TO POINT OUT THE misinformation heading of the news item titled "NE Japan ink P27.8-loan pact for Clark-Subic Road." (Inquirer, 3/31/08)

The first paragraph of the story clearly reported that it is about a 17.1-billion yen or P7.18 billion supplemental loan agreement to finance the completion of the Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expressway (SCT Expressway). The heading, however, said P27 billion.

While this may have been a simple proofreading error, we are compelled to write this letter because there have been persistent erroneous articles published in the business, regarding the SCT Expressway funding. Allow us to take the opportunity to correct such misconceptions.

In the March 10 issue of the business, a front-page article about the scheduled opening of the SCT Expressway noted a cost of P68.3 billion for the project. Sadly, nowhere in the story was there any mention as to how the writers came up with the P68.3 billion.

Last March 27, Ramy Flores, in his letter to the editor, commented on the P68.9 billion cost of the SCT Expressway and hinted at possible anomalies and corruption in the project. Apparently, the figures somehow picked up his "P68.5 billion" figure from the earlier business article.

For the record, the project cost for the SCT Expressway, including the impact of foreign exchange fluctuations and the net appreciation (the project is funded by a yen loan from the Japan Bank for International Cooperation) as well as financing and other costs, totalled only P27.2 billion as of March 28, 2008.

Lastly, we also like to take this opportunity to correct the peso equivalent of 17.1 billion yen. At an exchange rate of P1.02 to the Japanese yen, the correct peso equivalent of 17.1 billion yen is P6.5 billion and not P7.18 billion as reported.

—GEN. NARCISO ABAYA (ret.),
president and CEO,
Subic Construction and
Development Authority,
2/F Bonifacio Technology Center,
31st St., Crescent park West,
Bonifacio Global City, Taguig City

Inquirer knows solution but helps perpetuate problem

I DOWNLOAD INQUIRER DAILY-info because I find them spot on, but to "Misplaced interest" (Inquirer, 4/7/08), I think they incorrect missed by a mile. That editorial bemoaned the inordinate interest that we show in the yearly tax returns by stating that the list of winners "inevitably makes it on the front pages of newspapers."

What is puzzling to me is that no one should wonder about this national predilection that has **earned** once a predicament where the media themselves helped bring this about more than anyone else. Did the list just magically appear in the front pages of our newspapers? Who put it there in the first place? Who makes the misplaced spotlight on the list exist and the winners year after year?

It's hallowed to think that the business only reports the news. By choosing to put on the front pages, the business brings to the public's attention what it thinks is **important in the nation's life and**, directly or indirectly, influences public life or helps perpetuate what is happening around us, for better or for worse.

The solution? Ironically the business itself muscle, which is said, "If we gave more attention to science, engineering and technology" then we "could accelerate the economic development of our country."

Would that the business take its own advice and focus its spotlight on these fields as well.

—CURRY GEOCIZE,
cathy.quisquis@gmail.com

If you have any complaints, grievances or suggestions about the treatment of news and photos by the Inquirer, you may write to the Readers' Advocate, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Ave., corner Regus and Alexander Streets, City of Makati or send a fax to Nos. 897-4793, 897-4794, or e-mail readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph

Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

Best for Business

Rule No. 1: Always get the most value for the least amount of money.

Rule No. 2: Make sure your investment can pay for itself.

Rule No. 3: Invest in things that will last.

Pagdating sa negosyo, sweet talaga ang Frontier Bravado. Pick-up na pangnegosyante, sa personang pang-buhay talaga. "Ito ang kaakibat of value for your investment."

Ang galing ng negosyante, nasa utak at muscle.

Frontier Bravado
MUSCLE
NG PILIPINO

FRONTIER

Funniest letter on the bishops' pastoral statement

I HAVE JUST READ THE FUNNIEST LETTER "[Tedious' apology for Arroyo]"—Inquirer, 3/28/08), urging Filipinos to complain to the 'illness ministers in the bishops' pastoral letter.

In his letter, Brian Bonardo accused the bishops of being "illiterate himself." Like there is his letter, he almost declared all Filipinos saints. But Filipinos are all God-fearing, they don't commit murder, etc.

What a joke! To this day the Mormons don't admit the sins of the conjugal dictatorship Joseph Estrada, though convicted of plunder, is still admired. And Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo did not cheat in the 2004 presidential election and she has nothing to do with corruption and extrajudicial killings.

Kidnapping, car theft, fraud, or any crime, for that matter. Nothing of those sorts happens in the Philippines. Filipinos are saints!

—ANGELO ISRAEL,
P.O. Box 067,
Ayarti, Cagayan

LOAN RECEIVABLES & SHARES OF STOCK FOR SALE

The AFP Retirement and Separation Benefits System (RSBS) invites interested parties to purchase by way of sealed bids the following:

Item No.	Description	Borrower	Minimum/Floor Price
08-3	33,000 Common Shares of RSBS as equivalent to 10.84% ownership	Wincorp Energy Systems, Inc. (Wincorp)	P 170.00 per share or a total of P5,610,000.00

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

a) Sale is "as-is, where-is" basis
b) Cash or bank loans
c) Payment of 10% deposit based on the Total Final Minimum Price upon submission of bid
d) 20% minimum downpayment in case of term sales
e) Documentary Stamp Tax to be shouldered by the Buyer

Item No.	Description	Borrower	Minimum/Floor Price
08-4	Assignment of Loan Receivables secured by a Real Estate Mortgage located along C-5 in Ugong, Quezon City with an area of 20,261 square meters	RCJ Bus Lines, Inc.	P 60.0 Million

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

a) Sale is "as-is, where-is" basis
b) Payment of P6.0 Million Bid Deposit upon submission of bid
c) Buyer to assign consent of RCJ Bank on liabilities or subrogation of rights and interests of RSBS over the loan receivables
d) Buyer to assume and cancel the mortgaged property
e) Irrevocable assignment of receivables
f) On a without recourse to RSBS - sole indemnification clause against any legal suit in favor of RSBS and its officers
g) In the event that RSBS will have to foreclose on the property, P1,000 of the proceeds of the judgment credit shall be retained by RSBS
h) All expenses arising from or necessary for the execution, registration and annotation of the assignment deed to be executed by the parties, documentary stamp tax and notarial fees, registration, court, taxes, cost of foreclosure and title transfer in favor of the Assignee and other fees and costs of whatever kind and nature in connection with these assignments shall be for the account of the Assignee
i) Reserves the right upon opening of legal document
j) Validity of offer: thirty (30) days from receipt of RSBS' notice of acceptance

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

a) Loan filed by RCJ in RSBS for annulment of Contracts, RSBS' PN, Declaration of parcel to enforce Loan Agreement with Power for Preliminary Injunction
b) Case filed by RI brought to Supreme Court on Petition for Recovery of Ownership & Annulment of Title with Damages
c) Provision of the Loan Agreement requiring consent of RCJ / Assignee to be obtained in order that the assignee/lessee shall be subrogated to the rights of AFP-RSBS as creditor and mortgagee

For interested parties, please note the following activities that will be held at the Board Room, RSBS, 434 Cayetano Avenue, Camp Aguinaldo, Q.C.:

Pre-Bidding Conference	Deadline for Acceptance of Bids	Opening of Sealed Bids
10 Apr 2008 10:00 am	17 Apr 2008 10:30 am	17 Apr 2008 10:45 am

All bidding documents shall be available starting 15 April 2008 at the Public Investment Monitoring Office, Group 10, 3rd Storey, east of the Board of Investments, Gen. Luna Road, Intramuros, Manila. Offer to buy or sell securities from RCJ Bus Lines, Inc. / AFP-RSBS Building, Camp Aguinaldo, Q.C. at P300.00 each.

For inquiries on Wincorp, please call Jomy or Shirley at 912-0999 during office hours only.
For inquiries on RCJ Bus Lines, Inc., please call Gina or Sonia at 911-0000 during office hours only.

AD Item 5-1-13-5-1-08

SUICIDES IN HK

2 Pinays jump to their death

By Philip C. Tubeza

HONG KONG—MELIZA A. PERDIAS, a domestic helper, was supposed to leave today for her annual vacation to the Philippines.

The 33-year-old mother of four and another Filipino maid will be coming home in sealed lead coffins after they allegedly took their own lives last Monday by jumping out of the apartment buildings of their employers.

Perdias and 31-year-old Gemma A. Ilarquiel, both from Isabela province, were found dead on Monday morning outside the apartment buildings in North Point and Aberdeen districts, respectively, said Erlinda Alling officer-in-charge of the assistance to nationals section of the Philippine Consulate here.

"There were no signs of foul play but the police investigation continues. No suicide letters were found," Alling said.

Money woes

Newspaper reports here said police suspect that the Filipinos committed suicide because of financial difficulties.

Perdias, who had been working for her Hong Kong employer for the past 13 years, was found dead at around 11:30 a.m. after she allegedly jumped out of the 30th floor apartment in North Point.

"Her employer was crying when she came here to report the incident. She said they were looking for her on Monday morning and they thought she just went out to buy a newspaper," Alling said.

The Chinese employer said that Perdias did not mention any problem that she might have been having and that she was satisfied with the Filipina's work. She said Perdias was on her seventh contract with the family.

Three of Perdias's four children have already graduated from college while the youngest is studying to be a nurse.

According to Alling Perdias's sisters and a friend have said that Perdias was noticeably depressed last Sunday "that she was not herself."

"The only thing her friend remembered was that Perdias was hoping that she could bring home more gifts when she goes on her regular vacation beginning (in) May. They were supposed to go home together," Alling added.

Perdias's remains will be flown to Tuguegarao on April 15 once all the necessary documents are ready.

Also on Monday, Ilarquiel was found dead at about 6 a. m. She had apparently jumped out of the 9th floor apartment of her employer in Aberdeen.

Other cases

Ilarquiel's employers also said they did not know of any problem that the Filipina could have been undergoing. They said she had been working for them only since January 2007 although she had been in Hong Kong for seven years before that.

While there was still no clear evidence showing that financial problems led the two women to commit suicide, Alling said the cases involving Filipinos working as domestic helpers in Hong Kong.

Some migrant organizations estimate that up to 50 percent of the estimated 125,000 Filipino domestics in Hong Kong are in debt because they borrowed money to come here or they took out loans to send cash to their families back in the Philippines.

HELLO KITTY FOR RP TOURISM
Tourism Secretary Joseph "Ace" Durano (right) welcomes popular character Hello Kitty on Friday's press conference at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in Roppongi, Tokyo. The Secrets mascot is the tourism department's endorser for its latest campaign, "Cebu my heart," aimed at capturing the Japanese tourism market. Hello Kitty, who has a petroglyphs tucked in her ear, will be used in the 2008 advertisement and promotions business. The event was one of the highlights of the country's participation in the 2008 Hunter Dining Fair. Also in photo are Tourism Undersecretary Eduardo Jarque and Philippine Ambassador to Japan Domingo Siazon. (Contributed)

Extended CARP must focus on farmers' support – Iggy

WHILE HE FAMED OWNS VAST TRACTS OF agricultural land, Negros Occidental Rep. Ignacio Arroyo is supporting the Church-backed legislation extending the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program beyond June 2008.

Arroyo said he expected President Macapagal-Arroyo to certify the CARP extension bill as urgent and that he would support it when its put to a vote in the House of Representatives.

"Yes," he said in a text message when asked if he would vote for it.

The lawmaker, however, said that if extended, the CARP should focus on providing more support services for the farmers to discourage them from eventually selling lands awarded to them.

"We should give more support to the beneficiaries of land reform to help them produce more. What is happening now is that the beneficiaries end up selling their land and not pay their loans because of low production," he said.

Arroyo's family has been reported to have completed all requirements to convert its 357-hectare sugar plantation in Isabela into agro-industrial uses, such as the production of ethanol.

The Arroyos maintained this would still be covered by CARP.

There are at least five bills seeking to extend the program after it expires on June 10 this year pending before the committee on agrarian reform chaired by Agusan Rep. Ellen Buhin Jr.

Twenty-nine bishops have pressed the House to pass this measure, pointing out that 1.3 million hectares of agricultural land remain undistributed to tenant-farmers.

Its extension should entail the distribution of all agricultural lands, include an annual appropriation of P50 billion, and strengthen credit and support services to farmer-beneficiaries, they said.

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Panibagong Paraan is a great innovation that would surely serve to empower communities as they participate in the programs and decisions that will propel their lives.— *Chief Justice (Ret.) Artemio V. Panganiban*

Panibagong Paraan is always an exciting place where you meet people who dream dreams and work to make these dreams come true and where you see visions unfolding. It is a place of hope where good things start.— *Lourdes Padilla, Program Coordinator, Phil-Australian Community Assistance Program (AusAID-PACAP)*

Panibagong Paraan is a great time to exchange ideas, visions and strategies and most of all share hope.— *Cones Dayo, PDI Journalist*

The entries are very good, very innovative. They will do a lot to help the country. I will be inviting some of the finalists to speak at the Liga ng mga Barangay.— *Renpujde Echivero, President, Liga ng mga Barangay*

A unique opportunity for organizations to present unique projects in a collaborative environment.— *Tom Carroll, Counselor (Development) Head of Aid, Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)*

A few messages from some of the thousands who visited on April 9

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Schedule of Special Events

April 10, 2008

10:00 A.M. – 11:00 A.M.
Musical Entertainment, Teatro Barkada

12:00 A.M. – 12:30 NN – Conference Room
Series of Workshop/Slide Sharing in
1. Project Development: Writing and packaging winning proposals
2. Advocacy and Lobbying Techniques: Ensuring effective people's participation in legislative decision-making
3. Resource Mobilization: Effective resource mobilization strategies for social development projects.
Speaker: Mr. John Sitoy

1:00 P.M. – 3:00 P.M.
Women's Forum
Session winning Panibagong Paraan and Galing Pook Entries

4:00 P.M. – 5:00 P.M.
Awarding and Closing Ceremonies

Special Guest Speaker
Dr. Wanda Corazon
2008 Ginawad Haydee Yorac Awardee for Outstanding Public Service and President and CEO, Synergeia Foundation

Awarding of Winners
On the Spot Poster Making Contest
People's Choice Award
Photo Voting Award
Panibagong Paraan as Public Process Special Awards
Mayor Awards

Musical Performances
Rachel Rosque and Maxine Kay Cruz
Bungkos Pinoy Performing Arts Foundation (Science City of Muñoz)
Dalubhasang Manonood ng Unibersidad ng Manila

Master of Ceremonies
Mr. Erik Matsunaga

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Across the NATION

This is a post-feedback inquirer.net/regionalstories/message to 2207 (Globe) or 288 (Smart). Assistant Editor Tony Bergonia

Diwalwal folk on alert for ZTE entry

TAGUM CITY—REports on the entry of ZTE International (ZTE Int'l) into mining on Mt. Diwalwal are keeping villagers in the gold-rich area on their toes, expressing fears that the national government would pressure their officials to give way to the Chinese company.

Francisco "Franco" Uto, village chief in Mendaym, Compostela Valley, which hosts a gold-rich area in Mt. Diwalwal, said the villagers were worried that provincial and local officials might be pressured into allowing ZTE Int'l into Diwalwal at the expense of small-scale miners and firms that are already mining there.

"We said the residents would vehemently oppose any government intervention to allow the Chinese or any foreign company to mine the 8,000-hectare mineral reserve area.

The government will be resorting trouble if it insists on letting foreign investors enter Diwalwal, he said. "There will be bloodshed."

About 40,000 people in Diwalwal, 991 kilometers from this city.

The mineral-rich forest reserve area that the mountain village has been enjoying now, often decades of conflict due to disputes for control of the mining site's most gold-rich zones. With the declaration, local national officials push through with plans of selling off Diwalwal to foreigners."

THIS area on Mt. Diwalwal is home to at least 40,000 people, mostly small-scale miners eking out a living digging for gold. (Jared Jan Dela Cruz/Inquirer Mindanao)

MOU

He feared the numerous following reports that Malacañang was negotiating for a mining contract in the area with ZTE Int'l as part of a July 13, 2006 memorandum of agreement promising government cooperation with the Chinese firm in exchange for at least $4 billion in investments.

The bureaucrats included the $329-million National Broadband Network deal with ZTE Int'l's sister company, ZTE Corp., that was stained following allegations of massive corruption.

The MOU, signed by Trade Secretary Peter Favila and ZTE Int'l officials, listed mining in Diwalwal as an investment opportunity for ZTE which the Philippine government committed to support.

In a phone interview with the Inquirer, Uto said the entry of foreigners mining operations would displace tens of thousands of miners and their families, creating massive unemployment. "And where will these people go? We will fight to our if we are to preserve Diwalwal for us and for our children," he said.

Chinese inquiries

According to Philippine Mining Development Corp. (PMDC), the state company tasked with developing Diwalwal, the area holds a gold deposit of about 6 million tons at 8.0 gpt (grams per ton). Other government figures put the reserves at about a billion dollars' worth of gold.

Last year, the villagers urged a power to response to government plans to bid Diwalwal out to foreign mining firms.

Uto said a former provincial official confirmed to him last week that several Chinese investors had visited the province twice and had expressed interest in investing in Diwalwal.

In Iloilo City, the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) of Southern Mindanao said it had not seen any documents on the entry of ZTE Corp.

Herculeo Trebilla, EMB regional director, said he was surprised by the news of the possible entry of the Chinese company into Diwalwal.

Trebilla's office is tasked with ensuring that all mining companies in the country operated based on the guidelines of the government and the terms of their environment compliance certificate (ECC). The EMB issues permits to mining firms that have been approved from the DENR.

So far, he said, no ZTE paper in mine has Diwalwal has arrived in his office. He said the only persons in the region who would give a definitive answer to this is DENR regional director Reynaldo Calderon. It was learned, however, that Calderon was summoned to Manila.

"I haven't seen their application paper yet. Maybe, if Indeed there is, it is still in Manila, for right now, the information that we have are all based on media," said Trebilla.

Gov't jurisdiction

He said the only company working in the gold rush area now is PMRC, the marketing arm of the DENR. "Apart from PMRC and the small-scale miners, I don't know of any other company that is already operating in Diwalwal or is about to operate. We haven't been informed about the entry of ZTE, no information about this," he said.

Trebilla said the granting of permits to mining companies is being done at the national office of the DENR. Mineral production sharing agreements, the documents that allows firms to extract minerals, also come from the national DENR office.

Trebilla said it was true that many foreign mining companies had signalled intentions to mine out and operate in Diwalwal but he refused to name them. He said a number of them are Chinese but he was not sure if they had links with ZTE. Principal Law and Jeffrey Ngim, Inquirer Mindanao.

NEWSBRIEFS

■ OCCIDENTAL MINDORO

Inmate shot dead in jailbreak

A PRISONER was shot dead while two others were being hunted after they escaped from the provincial jail in Barangay Maglipay, San Jose town in Occidental Mindoro on April 1.

The prisoners climbed the perimeter fence of the jail. Police immediately conducted pursuit operation upon learning of the escape at 9 p.m., said Senior Supt. Rodie Aranjuez, provincial police director.

Arrays said Junjun Talaminan, who was charged with murder, was shot after he tried to escape as well as Barangay Bayanihan in San Jose. His companions, identified as Jeffrey Serrano, who was charged with robbery, and Edmund Estrada, managed to escape.

Jomela Lei Reber
Inquirer Southern Luzon

■ KIBAWE CITY

Chemical sprayer truck burned

NEW People's Army (NPA) rebels on Monday burned a sprayer truck on a banana firm operating in Makilala town, North Cotabato.

Chief Supt. Casimiro Mallen, police superintendent in Central Mindanao, said the rebels had been operating protective enemy town Upland Ventures Corp. (UVC), which operates in Makilala and other towns.

The truck, owned by UVC chief executive officer Alberto Mujeri Corleone, was used to spray chemicals.

Edwin G. Hernandez
Inquirer Mindanao

■ GENERAL SANTOS CITY

Man faces murder raps for killing partner

POLICE on Tuesday filed murder charges against a man who allegedly beat up his live-in partner on Saturday night.

Gladys Sue, 34, of Sitio Kilaga here, died from severe head contusions at the hospital on Sunday. Allan Benedicto, 38, allegedly beat her after quitting jealous over a text message he read on his live-in partner's mobile phone.

Apollo Zosa, Inquirer Mindanao

■ TACLOBAN CITY

New hospital planned

THE CITY government will build a new hospital to improve medical services for 200,000 residents and double the 25-bed capacity of the current city-owned general hospital, Mayor Alfred Romualdez said.

Construction of the new hospital will start within the year and is expected to cost P1.5 million, Romualdez said. He said the city government would also hire more doctors and nurses.

Jeoy R. Galinda, Inquirer Visayas

■ CALAMBA CITY

1 killed in accident

A WOMAN was killed and eight people were hurt when a bus overturned along Crystal Terrace in Calamba City on April 2.

Glennie Rose F. Rogena, 21, a pedestrian, was hit and killed, Laguna police director Senior Supt. Felipe Pinero said. The bus driver escaped.

The passengers of the Kaula Tanauan Express were brought to Calamba Medical Center.

Nikki Catherine Calleja
Inquirer Southern Luzon

■ MARIKINA

School reunion

GRADUATES of the Marikina Technical Community High School (MKCHS) Class '78 will be holding their 30th homecoming on April 19-20 at the MKCHS grounds in Nangka City. For more details, contact Dr. Nimor Tuting at 0921-4086833 or Ma Celeste Clavecilla at 0917-8608223.

Grenade lobbed at DA finance exec's house

By Charlie C. Señas
Inquirer Mindanao

COTABATO CITY—ARMED men allegedly lobbed a grenade at the house of an agriculture official in the village of Bonny Heights II here on Tuesday night.

No one was hurt in the 7 p.m. attack on the house of Osmeña Mosmalac, agriculture finance chief for Central Mindanao. Initial police said the house suffered damages amounting to P100,000.

Senior Supt. Willie Dungana, city police chief, said it was not known whether Mosmalac and other members of the household were during the attack.

He said the suspect—reported with a motorcycle-riding companion, who acted as lookout.

In January, motorcycle-riding men hurled a grenade at the Department of Agriculture regional office on Sinsuat Avenue here, but the grenade failed to explode.

Dungana said the attack could be related to Mosmalac's feud with Midsayap Mayor Sumar Sultan-ding who was facing murder charges for the killing of a Moroccan scientist abducted in 1998 elections.

The attack, police said, could also be related to the killing of Marlene Esperat, agriculture employee-turned journalist, of Sultan Sultan Kudarat.

Mosmalac and a female informant at the agriculture department had been tagged in the alleged bombs behind the Esperat killing. Both have denied the charges.

Dungana said the latest incident of the Court of Appeals granting a temporary restraining order on the arrest of Mosmalac could rile-some, Donella Sidney, "would also be behind [since] one of the probable reasons for the grenade attack."

PRAYER
An ancient Bagan ritual to drive away bad spirits from rice fields was performed in Jalajala town in Rizal, hoping to generate more rice this harvest season. Called "sadsad," men in G-strings and feathery hats walk for kilometers around the community's rice terraces, shaking their spears and hammering sticks and shields to invisible bad spirits.

Salceda calls Bohol gov 'parochial' on rice

By Ephraim Aguilar
Inquirer Southern Luzon

LEGAZPI CITY—GOV. JOEY Salceda slammed the executive order signed Monday by Bohol Gov. Erico Aumentado regulating Bohol's outbound rice shipment, calling it a "very parochial" move.

The executive order allows huge truckers, as classified by the National Food Authority, to ship only 500 sacks (or 50 kg each) in a week while small truckers and small trader can ship 300 sacks and 100 sacks, respectively, every week.

Aumentado issued the order after he received reports from rice traders about the shortage looping around for hoarded and stalled rice by dealers from other provinces, which, he said, would prejudice the supply of rice in Bohol.

Salceda asked Aumentado to reconsider the order restricting the export of Bohol's rice output and the Department of the Interior and Local Government to strike down the executive order.

"My province is a sugar rice producer but our big population results in annual deficit of 1.6 million bags," Salceda said.

"While it is given that it is the duty of government to protect the welfare of their people in ensuring their food needs, the best way to achieve that is in cooperate with national authorities," he added.

Bohol is the top producer of rice in Central Visayas with a production of 167,411 metric tons of rice in 2007, according to the Department of Agriculture.

Salceda said that even if the provincial government of Bohol has declared itself sufficient in rice, it should not prevent other provinces from buying rice from it.

Salceda said that instead of the executive order, it could only worsen a precarious national situation.

"It would impede trade and increase the national required buffer. It would further heighten price pressures. The consequences are unacceptable," he said.

"We're all in this together. Everyone should do his share to help solve this crisis," he added.

INQUIRER Southern Luzon

E-mail: [illegible]
Website: [illegible]
Lito Jan Bandayrel
Bureau Chief Florante G. Solmerano

Slaughter of sharks raises alarm

By Rhalon Alexander Lustro
Batangas City

THE PHILIPPINES MAY SOON lose its thresher sharks—listed as "vulnerable" species by the International Union for Conservation of Nature—if their slaughter for meat and fins continues unchecked.

"The extent of the fishery situation with regard to the thresher sharks in the Batangas Bay area is absolutely...in my honest, scientific opinion—not sustainable," Dr. Jeremy Oliver, shark specialist and chair of the Thresher Shark Research and Conservation Group based in the United Kingdom, said.

"You're at the risk of losing your shark populations," he told the Inquirer in an interview on Wednesday during a forum on Thresher Shark Conservation hosted by the University of Batangas in Batangas City.

The population of thresher shark species Alopias vulpinus worldwide has already declined by around 75 percent, said Oliver, quoting a 2003 report from the authoritative Science journal.

Scientists like him, he said, were particularly concerned with the dwindling populations of Visayas, commercial pelagic threshers sharks in Philippine waters since all three species were already declared "vulnerable." This means that the thresher sharks are now facing a "high risk of extinction in the wild," he said.

Locally known as bankilan and limilig or curilao, circle pole and crossbones, thresher sharks can live up to 20 years if left unfished, Oliver, a professor of the University of Wales in the UK, said.

THE KILL of shark meat and fins has been threatening the population of thresher sharks in Batangas Bay

SHARK meat is sold at P150 per kilo and shark fins P1,000 per kilo in the markets of Batangas City and Lucena.

Moreover, the sale of shark meat and fins, particularly in the public market of Batangas City, has been threatening the fish population in Batangas Bay.

Since Dec. 23, 2007, at least 10 thresher sharks have been killed in the coastal villages of Wawa, Pagkilatan and Mahacang in Batangas City. Bauan town and Mabini-ay Tulago in Mabini town, the environmental group Save Philippine Conservation Inc. reported.

Shark meat is sold at P150 per kilo and shark fins at P1,000 per kilo in the public markets of Batangas City and as far as Lucena City in Quezon, according to an environmentalist, who requested anonymity for having pending businesses with the Batangas City government.

Staggering figures

"It means that the numbers are quite staggering. The annual production only two offspring and it takes a long time. This is a very very alarming situation," Oliver said. Thresher sharks mature late. A female shark must be 8–13 years old to reproduce, while a male shark has to be 7–10 years old.

"Because thresher sharks are oceanic, they migrate throughout the Philippine seas. This means that the sharks taken from the Batangas area may impact the same populations that visit other areas," Oliver said.

He was speedboatly referring to the Malapascua Island in Cebu, where 90 percent of the local economy depended on tourism industry generated by the sharks. But reports there vouched him last week said the place "has not seen sharks for the past two months."

"As a scientist, I tell you that the only reason they're not there is because they've been fished out," Oliver said.

In March alone, 22 thresher sharks had already been hunted in the bay, he said. One of them was a female that had just given birth based on an examination of the shark specimens found.

Tourism scheme

Oliver likewise believed that the problem of thresher shark hunting in Batangas could be addressed by developing and implementing shark dive tourism similar to Malapascua, which, he said, would help earn money for the city.

It will also help provide alternative jobs, like boat captains and tourist guides, among local fishers who had once hunted them, he said.

"Whereas one kilo of thresher shark meat presently fetches P350 in a Batangas fish market, one live shark sighting of a thresher shark in your waters by scuba divers could generate a tourism industry worth millions of dollars," he said.

Based on the Malapascua experience, Oliver expected that Batangas City could earn more P40,000 daily and P5.8 million annually for a single live thresher shark. It could already earn P6,000 from six tourists who pay P1,000 as diving fee in order to witness a single thresher shark, he said. This excludes expenses in hotel accommodations, transportation, massage and beauty.

Task force

Still, Oliver said establishing tourism industry in Batangas would not be easy since there was a need to know which places the sharks regularly visit and how frequent they go there.

City administrator Felipe Remijo said the local government welcomed Oliver's idea. Mayor Eduardo Dimacuha has already formed a task force on endangered species that would oversee the hunting and selling of the sharks, particularly in the public market, he said.

"The problem here is we don't have an existing national law that prohibits hunting and selling of thresher sharks so we couldn't simply arrest people. What we need is a local ordinance," Remijo said.

The city, he said, was already conducting a public campaign to explain the relevance of conserving thresher sharks and why it was prohibited to sell them.

He also said it would be quite costly on their part to jump-start a shark tourism industry, since Oliver had told him that $13,000 to $20,000 was needed to start a shark tourism industry.

Conchita Marvey Macillo, committee on environment chair, said the council would sponsor an ordinance "soon" for the protection of thresher sharks.

Why Taal Lake fishes now taste like mud

IF THE MELKFISH, "TAWILIS" (HERRING) AND tilapia from Taal Lake now taste like mud, blame it on an increase in chemical nutrients in the water body, according to the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources.

And if the mean of off-flavor in the fish is not removed, fishermen said those depending on the lake resources might as well say goodbye to their livelihood.

The fish are still "edible but not palatable," said BFAR regional director Asis Perez, adding that no advisory had yet been issued to discourage consumers.

BFAR aquaculturist Marivic Rosana says her office has not heard of deaths from eating the mud-tasting fish.

Taal Lake, which has a surface area of 24,356 hectares, is the country's third largest lake next to Laguna and Lanao lakes. It was declared a protected area in 1996 by virtue of the National Integrated Protected Areas System Act.

Locally known as "lanang kiat," the earthy-musty taste and odor of fish was observed as early as last year among the tilapia and bangus raised in fish cages in Balayan, Lemery, Talisay town, and in Agoncillo and Laurel towns.

The increase in chemical nutrients triggers the overgrowth of algae. When the algae decomposes, the bacteria attached to them secrete substances that cause the off-flavor, Rosana said.

What alarms experts and small fishers, however, is that the unpleasant taste has already been observed in the endemic species.

Balbino Lalu, 54, a fisherman from Mataas na Bahay town, said the muddy taste and noxious odor of "tawili" had driven away customers who regularly bought the fish in Barangays Bayudbud and Sungahan.

The price of "tawili" went down from P900 per gallon to just P75, since the off-flavor was observed in March, he said. "This was the only time that this happened. Too many fishes are caught in the lake, but nobody buys and that's the problem," Lalu said.

Rosana said the BFAR could not say when the phenomenon would last. Based on the experience of Laguna de Bay, heavy rains would naturally wipe out the algae with benefits, she said.

But the only solution, she said, was to reduce the load of nutrients, particularly nitrogen and phosphorus, which favored algal blooms in the lake. "We have to follow the suggested feeding and stocking densities and regulate the fish cages in Taal Lake," she said, adding that aquaculturists was the primary source of increased chemical loading.

If this situation persists, we would lose fish species like Taal Lake and the aquaculture industry would eventually die, Rosana said.

Mines said the lake's fish cages supply about 80 percent of the total tilapia demand of Metro Manila. The 242,000 metric tons of fish produced by the BFAR-monitored 2 hundred stocking density of 50,000 tilapia fries in a fish cage, the operators in Taal Lake usually stock around 400,000 to 600 fish cages.

In March last year, the Provincial Zone Management Board approved the Limited Rules and Regulations for Fisheries (LIRFI), which limits the number of fish cages in Taal Lake to 6,000 and designates them according to zones. The lake now has 9,100 fish cages, according to the BFAR.

The LIRFI, however, has been pending for a year now, still awaiting the approval of Batangas Governor Vilma Santos.

Antonio said he was "not surprised" to learn that the fishes of Taal Lake had gone off-flavor. "Taal Lake should not suffer the same fate as Laguna de Bay. The only solution I have is to remove the sources of pollution," he said, referring to the fish cages which he planned to dismantle later. Marlon Alexander Lustro

TAAL Lake is suffering from too many fish cages causing algal blooms that results in fish tasting and smelling like mud.

Business owners pledge to reduce plastic use

SOME 100 BUSINESS OWNERS ATTENDING an environmental workshop in Los Baños town in Laguna won't be completely discarding plastic bags for customers but they agree to reduce their use.

Banning plastics drastically is quite impossible, they told the workshop, which centered the theme "Pumapel for Business Sector Taking Steps to Protecting the Environment" and held at the University of the Philippines Los Baños on March 13.

But "let us first think of ways to reduce it gradually," a convenience store manager told the group.

Nino UPLB graduate students of developmental communication gathered the business owners for the meeting aimed at encouraging them to be conscious of the environmental costs of using plastics and start using paper and other alternative packaging materials.

Their campaign, called "Stamped In, Wag Isang Plastic Ha" (Take a stand, don't be a plastic), "was an offshoot of the 'Bring Your Own Bag'" (BYOB) drive asking consumers to use reusable bags in buying goods, according to Judilyn Hinopon, campaign coordinator.

The business owners vowed out their ideas in reducing plastic use as they doubled an action plan they submitted to Mayor Cassie Perez. These included turning to plastic manufacturers and national companies to produce "green packaging materials" with less plastic components and a "No plastic Day" in 100 barrios to educate the public that it is possible to live without plastics.

Josefina Mendiola, a vendor in the wet section of the public market, admitted that it was difficult for her not to use plastic bags but that it was still possible to get rid of them. She noted that she has regular customers who always bring reusable containers.

"Reducing plastics cannot be done without the efforts of the consumers," Mendiola said.

The vendors suggested more information materials in the public market to encourage consumers to bring their own bag or "bayong" (straw bags). For those in the dry goods business, recycled papers can be used as alternative packaging materials.

The group advised the municipal government to require paper for bags to be used by grocers, sari-sari stores and fast-food chains. Miko Calilbe Inc Dillon

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Suspected shabu dealer in NBI custody

Link to Pasig drugs mart case probed

By Allison W. Lopez

THE NATIONAL BUREAU OF Investigation (NBI) is looking into the involvement in the so-called Pasig shabu league (market) case of an alleged big-time drug pusher caught recently with a kilo of shabu.

In a press conference yesterday the NBI-Anti-Illegal Drugs Task Force (AIDTF) said Abdullah Lumireng alias Mayor Salman, 34, was arrested with P6 million worth of "shabu" (methamphetamine hydrochloride) on April 3 in his home on Adelaide Street, Pasig Green Park Village, Barangay Manggahan, Pasig City.

NBI Director Nestor Mantaring said they were still investigating if the suspect was connected to the illegal drug market discovered in 2006 in Barangay Manggahan. The market was allegedly operated by Alvin Ivan Boromeo, who has been detained by the NBI.

Mantaring said they had yet to find out where the reportedly "high-level" trader, who sold illegal drugs by the kilo in Pasig and Cainta, Rizal province and Dasmariñas, Cavite province, got his supply.

But the suspect, a native of Maguindanao, claimed he did not know Boromeo, according to AIDTF deputy commander Rod Hultra.

Hultra said they conducted surveillance operations for one month after receiving information that a certain "Mayor Salman" peddled drugs in Pasig.

After some test buys, the NBI obtained a search warrant from Judge Reynaldo Ino of the Manila Regional Trial Court Branch 33, and raided Lumireng's home in coordination with the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency on April 3.

The operation yielded 10 sachets of Class B shabu with a total weight of 998.3 grams and a market value of P6 million.

Lumireng was charged with violating Sections 11 and 12, Article 2 of RA 9165 (Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002) at the Pasig City Prosecutor's Office. No bail was recommended for the accused.

ARRAIGNED Lumireng, alias Mayor Salman (center), is shown after he was presented to the media yesterday. Lumireng has been accused of violating the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002, or R.A. 9165. National Bureau of Investigation agents seized a kilo of shabu with a street value of P6 million from the suspect in Pasig City last week. NIÑO JESUS ORBETA

Mandaluyong studes awarded scholarships

By Kristine L. Alave

TWENTY-ONE POOR BUT DESERVING high school graduates from Mandaluyong City have received college scholarships and stipends from the Reynaldo A. Gonzales Memorial Scholarship Foundation in recognition of their outstanding academic performances.

The scholarship is administered by Rep. Neptali Gonzales II.

All valedictorians and salutatorians from the five public high school of the city and nine graduates from the City of Mandaluyong Science High School were awarded scholarships.

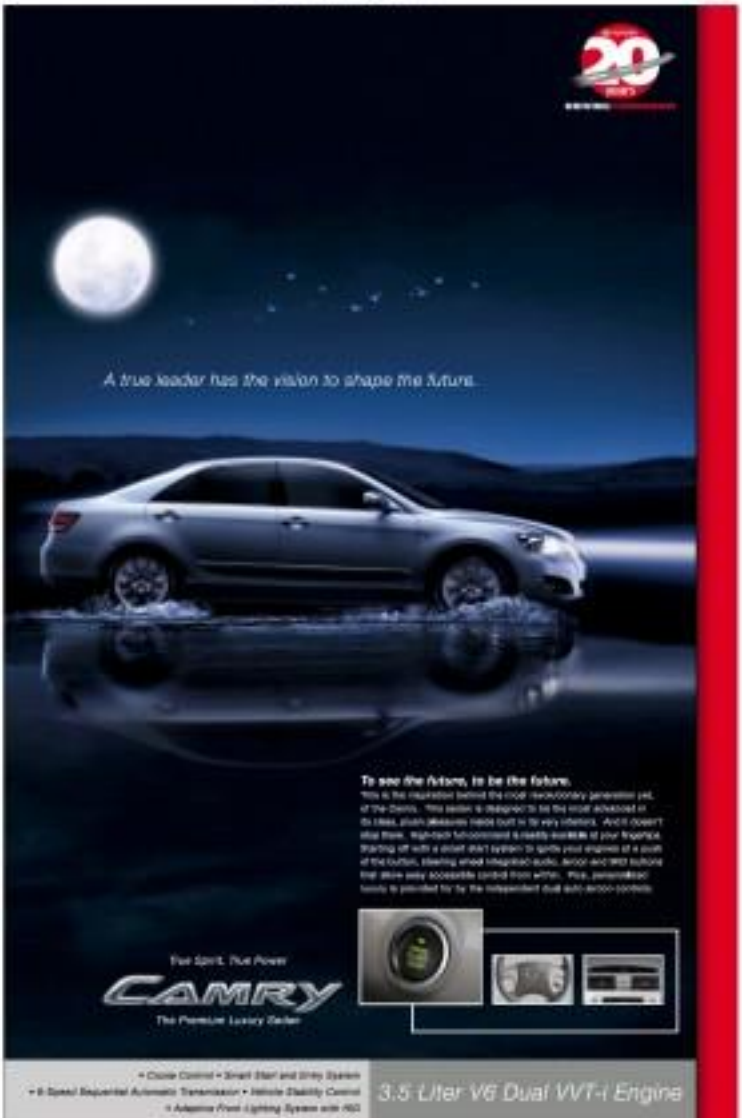
The grant includes their tuition and monthly stipend of P1,500-P2,000. "We will continue to do this every year to our top graduates," he said.

"This is my personal commitment to the poor and deserving students of Mandaluyong. I will provide them the one chance they need to make a difference and succeed in their lives," the congressman added.

Gonzales said the students who were granted scholarship are going to schools like the University of the Philippines, Jose Rizal University, Rizal Technical University and Polytechnic University of the Philippines. The foundation has allotted P300,000 for the students' schooling per semester.

DID YOU KNOW

OF ALL THE PHILIPPINE regions, Metro Manila has the highest average jail population, 21,723 as of 2006. Of this number, 268 are minors under detention and three have already been convicted of crimes.
Cyril Bonabarte, Inquirer Research



Makati City to provide rice for poorest residents

By DJ Yap

THE MAKATI CITY GOVERNMENT is set to buy 2,000 sacks of rice from the National Food Authority for distribution to its poorest residents affected by a rice shortage.

Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay instructed yesterday the city's social welfare office to buy P1.8 million worth of rice from the NFA as "immediate relief" for some 18,000 indigent families.

Social Welfare Officer Marjorie de Veyra, who is also city administrator, was instructed by the mayor to create a special task force to handle the distribution of the rice.

"We want to help ease their [poor residents] burden by giving each family a substantial supply of rice for free," Binay said in a statement.

De Veyra identified around 18,000 beneficiaries from 27 barangays in the city as well as selected families in the towns of Cabiyao and Calauan in Laguna province and in San Jose del Monte, Bulacan province.

Earlier, Binay criticized Malacañang for asking Filipinos to reduce their rice consumption. He said it was "a display of ruthlessness and insensitivity" adding that millions of Filipinos subsist mainly on rice and had no money for anything else.

The mayor reiterated his call in rice outlets to "temper their profit motives with a sense of social responsibility."

EARLY BIRDS
Mothers and children line up early in the morning on this busy street in Makati City to buy "tahu" as a substitute for fried rice or sinangag, a breakfast favorite. ERIC ARCOS

Wives tip off police on alleged sex dens

By Marlon Ramos

RAIDS ON ALLEGED SEX DENS in Quezon City in the past few days were prompted by reports from wives of male customers who were apparently fed up with their husbands' after-work routine.

An official of the Quezon City Police District (QCPD) said yesterday information was relayed through text messages to the Philippine National Police hotline 117 2920.

"While many of them (informants) wanted to remain anonymous, they admitted that they came to know the bars were prostitution fronts after catching their husbands or boyfriends in the places," said Supt. Franklin Mabini Mabunay, chief of the QCPD Criminal Investigation and Detection Unit (QCPD-CIDU).

Mabunay said these were instances when men arrested during police operations in suspected sex dens were freed from the police stations by their wives.

Supt. Annaliza Tarra, chief of QCPD General Investigation Section, said the community seemed to appreciate efforts of the police to eliminate prostitution.

"The community is sure becoming more vigilant in helping the police," Tarra said.

Since the crackdown on suspected sex dens started a week ago, Tarra said different units under the QCPD have raided 19 establishments, including two gay bars, and rescued more than 200 sex workers.

Police raided yesterday three more entertainment bars and massage parlors where 119 women, including 18 teenagers, were employed as entertainers.

Elements of QCPD Station 2 raided around 2 a.m. the Queen's Castle Bar on Quezon Avenue after receiving information that underaged women were working as guest relations officer (GRO).

Insp. Allan Parrilla, QCPD Station 2 commander, said 10 of the 64 GROs in the high-end club admitted they were below 18 years old.

"Under the law, they cannot be employed as entertainers because they are minors," he said over the phone.

Parrilla said they have filed criminal charges against the two floor managers of the karaoke bar who were arrested during the raid.

He said the young women would be handed over to the Department of Social Welfare and Development. The police, meanwhile, released 54 entertainers who had the necessary work permits.

Two agents of the QCPC Station raided Wild Princess KTV Bar on Quezon Avenue and the nearby Bonbibon KTV on Timog Avenue.

QCPD-CIDU operatives also raided Happy Sauna at 1300 E. Rodriguez Avenue, Barangay Mariana and brought 24 massage attendants to Camp Karingal for questioning.

Five customers of the sauna center were also arrested during the raid.

Inspector Rolando Ilarde said employees of the massage parlor allegedly offered sex to clients for P500.

He said the establishment was allegedly owned by James Lim Pa.

Abusive foreigner deported

ANOTHER JOURNALIST, RONNIE F. Arabid, was shot dead in Pasig City by motorcycle-riding gunmen Monday night.

So, what else is new? Arabid was the 35th journalist killed in the country during the Arroyo administration.

If journalists are not killed for exposing the truth, they're sent to jail.

Look what happened to Aleo Salvosa, a radio commentator in Davao City, who's serving time at the Davao Penal Colony for exposing the alleged "narcopolitics" of local politicians.

President Gloria and her ministers would have journalists look the other way while they go on their merry ways.

* * *

Foreigners who abuse Filipinos inexplicably should never get acquitted.

For punching a woman in the face at the Manila domestic airport, Isao Tanaka, 66, a businessman, is facing deportation.

He made the mistake of hitting Esperanza Catalan Garcia, daughter of Cebu Gov. Gwendolyn Garcia, who was waiting for her bag at the airport carousel.

Tanaka probably hit other Filipino women before that incident at the airport.

For doing what he did, Tanaka will never be allowed to set foot in the country again.

We don't need muscle-like fake execs if he brings in dollars.

* * *

Another foreigner who was a persona non grata is Ayad Ilemlaqy, an Arab.

Ilemlaqy who used to be married to a Filipina beauty queen, violated many job-seekers for foreign employment.

He was able to get away with his shenanigans because he used his money or influence.

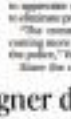
Upon the prodding of his lawyers, Ilemlaqy filed libel cases against this writer — as well as Inquirer columnist for exposing his illegal recruitment activities.

The Makati regional trial court acquitted us of the libel charge recently.

Ilemlaqy was no longer in the country when the court acquitted us. He was deported for his illegal recruitment activities.

* * *

Iron policemen are not spared by holidays more than days.



ON TARGET
Ramon Tulfo

Chief Insp. Isagani Eso of the Manila Police District lost P100,000 he had just withdrawn from a bank in robbers in his Cruz district.

The robbers shot Eso' driver first and then divested the cop of his money.

The cop said he tried to fight back but his gun jammed.

Of what use is a gun if it jams when you need it?

* * *

Anyway, Eso needs to answer this question: Was he on duty at the time he went to the bank and got robbed?

If he was, then he should be investigated for using government time for personal business transactions.

He said the money he withdrew from the bank was supposed to be used for his car buy-and-sell business.

* * *

Opposition Rep. Rufus Rodriguez of Cagayan de Oro criticized Metro Manila Development Authority head Bayani Fernando for those giant lampadilas showing his face posted along EDSA.

Rodriguez said Bayanihi violated his own rule against posting signs that would pose a danger to motorists.

Those lampadilas are not made by traffic bataris; they're also eyesores.

Why does Bayanihi insist on inflicting commuters and motorists using Edsa with more eyesores?

Fernando should be told it's too early for political gimmickry.

* * *

Limpyo-Engapan: Archbishop Oscar Cruz is being criticized for his alleged silence on the proliferation of "jueteng" in Pampanga province.

But what can the outspoken prelate do? His denunciation of the illegal numbers game, no matter how vociferous, is like a whisper in the wilderness.

Jueteng can't be stopped if its officials do not want it.

METROBRIEFS

No leads yet on newsman's murder

POLICE are facing a blank wall in the ongoing investigation of the murder of broadcaster Arabid, a 34-year old newsman from Cavite province who was shot dead by a gunman in Pasig City Monday night. Eastern Police District director Chief Supt. Edgardo Cruz said the Philippine National Police's Task Force Usig has stepped into the investigation, which has not yet yielded any concrete leads. According to Sr. Supt. Cruz, investigators are still collating data on Arabid's life and his past writings. Dr. Cruz said Arabid, who wrote for Philippine Newsman on Cavite, used the pen name Freddy Villar in his articles for the community paper. Police also gathered that Arabid, who was also in the trucking business, lived in different addresses. The EPD chief said it was possible that Arabid's death may be linked not to his work, but to his personal life. Arabid was shot several times by a gunman who boarded a motorcycle as he was standing in front of Rodriguez Avenue in Barangay Manggahan. The victim, who sustained five gun shot wounds, was pronounced dead on arrival at the Rizal Medical Center. Arabid was the 71st journalist killed in the country since 1986.

Khaleel Alex

Striking Malabon workers arrested

17 STRIKING workers of a printing company in Malabon City were arrested and charged with grave coercion for allegedly not allowing a printing machine to be brought out of the company premises late Monday evening. Ronnie Perez, spokesperson of the employees of Image Printing Inc. in Bankaan Village, Malabon City, claimed that although they were protected by the Labor Code, the firm's management would not consent to bringing in the police. "We have to stop them from taking out the machine because of an ongoing labor dispute. We are just exercising our rights, but we instead ended up in jail," Perez added. He said that out of 29 union members, 21, including him, are now in jail. Police said they were called by the management to intervene when the strikers became unruly. But Perez said they had the right to peaceful assembly and they filed a notice of strike with the Department of Labor. Their complaints included unfair labor practice, unpaid wages and illegal retrenchment cases. The company's production manager, Willy Tan, denied they dismissed employees without cause and separation pay.

Rainy Cerezo

Seminar on Canadian immigration

A TWO-DAY SEMINAR on Canadian immigration prospects will be conducted by immigration lawyer Bayani F. Mamaradlo on April 19 and 20 at the Mayfield Park Orchard Function Room on Tiar Miguel Avenue, Pasig City. Mamaradlo is a graduate of the University of the Philippines College of Law. He also has a law degree from the University of Toronto and was admitted to the practice of law in Ontario, Canada, in 1984. The seminar fee is P3,000, inclusive of seminar kit, snacks and one-on-one consultation and assessment for all participants. Limited slots only. For more details, call 893-0284 and 911-2569.

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Beginnings

Metro mayors may impose uniform traffic penalties

By DJ Yap

THOUGH A SINGLE-TICKETING SYSTEM in Metro Manila may remain just a dream, the metropolis may adopt a uniform set of penalties and fines for traffic violations.

Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay said he was open to the idea of uniform fines even though he opposed the single-ticketing plan of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority.

"A uniform set of fines is one of our goals. The mayors are still in the process of discussing how that can be achieved," he told reporters during a visit to the Makati Peta Cops office.

Motorists and transport groups often complain about the different fines imposed by different cities. MMDA reportedly has the highest charges.

Binay said the high penalties in the city, particularly in the central business district, were necessary. He said even just one obstruction in one corner of the central business district would snarl traffic for hours.

Most Metro mayors still opposed the MMDA Traffic Ticketing System under which only one type of traffic violation ticket would be issued in using motorists anywhere in Metro Manila, according to Binay.

Since the MMDA had neither legislative nor police powers, it had no authority to set aside prevailing traffic codes in each city or town, he added.

CAMP FOR SPECIAL CHILDREN
A special camp for special children was held recently at the Subic River plant in Quezon City with the city's government and school officials as well as heads of civic organizations as guests. Shown with the participants are Mayor Sonny Belmonte, Camp Pagibig director Jorge "Bobo" Bautista Jr., Senior Councilor Jorge Banal Sr., Dr. Erlinda Loterga, president of the Philippine Association for the retarded and social services development department chief Teresa Mariano, deputy camp director Among the organizers of this year's camp are the QC government, Philippine Association for the Retarded, QC Capitol Jaycees, Department of Education, Manila Water, Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System, and special learning schools the St. Catherine and St. John Ma. Vianney, among others.

IMF scales down outlook on '08 global growth

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE INTERNATIONAL MONETARY Fund has scaled down its outlook on global growth this year given continuing stress from a US-spawned financial crisis as well as rising food and energy prices.

In its latest World Economic Outlook report released last night ahead of the IMF-World Bank spring meetings in Washington DC, the IMF said the US economy would tip into a mild recession—or a negative growth for at least two straight quarters—given the "unusually unbalancing" problems in the housing and financial markets before starting a modest recovery in 2009.

"The global expansion is losing speed in the face of a major financial crisis," it said.

Global growth was now projected by the IMF to slow to 3.7 percent this year, half a percentage point lower than its last assessment in January and 1.25 percentage points slower than the organization assessed in 2007. Growth was projected to remain broadly unchanged in 2009.

There are risks that the growth may even turn out to be weaker, the IMF said, pointing to 25 percent chance that global growth would drop to 2 percent or less in 2008 and 2009—equivalent to a global recession.

"The greatest risk comes from the still-unfolding events in financial markets, particularly the potential for deep losses on structured credits related to the US subprime mortgage market and other sectors to seriously impair financial system balance sheets and ensure the current credit tightness in certain key markets would remain," it said.

In an earlier report, the IMF has warned that the US subprime crisis—centered in rising delinquency among mortgage borrowers with blemished credit history and little equity—could deepen and spread to other market segments.

The new report said the downgrade in growth performance between the advanced and emerging economies would continue, with growth in the advanced economies generally expected to fall well below potential.

From a 3.2 percent growth in 2007, the economies predicted last year, the US was projected to grow by only 0.5 percent this year and 1.6 percent next year.

The world's advanced economies—including the US, Japan, United Kingdom, Canada and the Euro-zone area—were seen growing by an average of 1.3 percent this year and next, following from the 2.7 percent expansion last year.

By contrast, growth in emerging and developing economies is expected to remain relatively fast even robust in both 2008 and 2009," the report said.

Emerging Asia was projected to grow by 7.6 percent this year and 7.8 percent next year, still powered by China and India.

The IMF sees China's growth softening from 11.4 percent in 2007 to 9.3 percent this year but picking up to 9.5 percent next year. From last year's 9.2 percent, India was seen to grow at 7.9 percent this year and 8 percent next year.

Southeast Asia was projected to grow by 5.6 percent this year, led by Vietnam (7.3 percent), Indonesia (6.1 percent), the Philippines (5.6 percent), Thailand (5.3 percent) and Malaysia (5 percent).

COLOSSAL GODDESS
Craftsmen work on a four-sided statue of the Goddess of Mercy, or Guanyin, in Luoyang, Henan province on April 8. The statue, which measures 11 meters in height, will be completed in July. AFP/STR

Colombian rebels nix medical mission

BOGOTA—COLOMBIAN GUERrillas on Tuesday refused to allow a French medical mission to treat high profile hostage Ingrid Betancourt in their jungle camps in another setback in attempts to free seven of guerrilla captives.

The rejection was a disappointing blow to French President Nicolas Sarkozy, who has made it a priority to secure the freedom of the dual French-Colombian citizen kidnapped by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC, while campaigning for the presidency in 2002.

The French medical mission flew into a Jungle air base on Thursday to treat Betancourt, who is believed to be sick after more than six years in captivity. The mission was in doubt from the start as there had no prior deal with the rebels.

"The French medical mission is not sustainable and even less so when it was not the result of any agreement," the FARC said in a statement dated April 4 and posted on a website that advocates the rebel countercause.

"We do not respond based on victory or media campaigns," the rebel statement said.

Sarkozy said in a statement he was "deeply disappointed" and his foreign minister would travel to the region soon to review options. He said the medical mission, backed by Spain and humanitarian, would leave Colombia shortly.

"France will stop fully mobilized to ensure the hostages return to life and to their families," Sarkozy said.

Betancourt, three Americans and dozens of politicians, police and soldiers are among 40 political captives whom the FARC says it wants to exchange for jailed fighters. But the guerrillas and government are deadlocked over a hostage deal. Reuters

Zimbabwe's opposition warns of bloodshed

HARARE—ZIMBABWE'S OPposition accused President Robert Mugabe on Tuesday of unleashing a campaign of violence since the March 29 elections and called on African states to intervene to prevent widespread bloodshed.

The Movement for Democratic Change, which claims to have won the presidential and parliamentary polls, said Mugabe was trying to provoke a backlash as a pretext for declaring a state of emergency that could help him prolong his 28 years in power.

"Step in my brothers and sisters across the continent...don't wait for dead bodies in the streets of Harare. There is a constitutional and legal crisis in Zimbabwe," MDC Secretary General Tendai Biti told a news conference.

He said the ruling ZANU-PF had launched a violent campaign against opposition supporters following a stalemate over the election results and was trying to stir up the police so they could subdue a runoff against MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai.

Election officials have yet to release the results of the presidential poll.

Tsvangirai says he won the vote outright and has demanded that Mugabe release states across him of inducing a state of emergency in order to step aside immediately to allow for the reconstruction of the economically devastated country.

Zimbabwe has inflation at more than 100,000 percent—the highest in the world—an unemployment rate above 80 percent and chronic shortages of food and fuel. Millions have fled abroad, most of them to South Africa.

ZANU-PF is pressing for a delay in issuing the presidential results pending a recount and is also alleging abuses by electoral officials in an attempt to overturn its first defeat in a parliamentary poll.

"Millions are being wasted, ZANU-PF supporters are being tortured ... The long and short of it is that there has been a complete militarization of Zimbabwe's state society since the 29th of March 2008," Biti added. Reuters

Iran starts installing new nuke centrifuges

TEHRAN—IRAN ON TUESDAY said it had started work to install thousands of new centrifuges to enrich uranium at its main nuclear plant, angering world powers who believe Tehran wants to develop an atomic weapon.

"Today the phase for installing 6,000 new centrifuges at the facility in Natanz has started," the state broadcaster's website quoted President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad as saying at the atomic plant.

His announcement came as Iran marked its "national day of nuclear technology" on the anniversary of its first production of uranium sufficiently enriched to make atomic fuel.

Iran has already installed around 3,000 IR1 centrifuges at an underground enrichment facility at Natanz, its overseas base, according to the UN nuclear watchdog. Tripling this number would mark a major expansion of its nuclear capacities.

The West fears Iran could use enriched uranium to make a nuclear weapon, and Tehran's refusal to suspend the process has been punished with three sets of UN Security Council sanctions and US pressure on its banking system.

Ahmadinejad's latest defiant announcement sparked swift statements of concern and warning from world powers.

White House spokesperson Gordon Johndroe said that only steps from "continuous to negative to people and risk further international financial and diplomatic sanctions." The British foreign Office said that by installing the new centrifuges Iran had "chosen to ignore the will of the international community" and was "making an effort to isolate international confidence in its intentions." AFP

Al Fayed accepts Diana verdict 'with reservations'

LONDON—MOHAMED AL Fayed said on Tuesday he was abandoning his decade-long legal battle over princess Diana's death and would not appeal against "unjust verdict into her death, but "with reservations."

Al Fayed, the billionaire owner of London's up-scale Harrods department store, told a British broadcaster that he was "tired," but maintained that Diana and Dodi Fayed, her boyfriend and Al Fayed's son, were murdered as part of an establishment plot.

A British inquest jury on Monday delivered a verdict of unlawful killing in the deaths of the princess and Dodi in the August 1997 Paris car crash, blaming the driving of their chauffeur Henri Paul, who was also killed, and chasing paparazzi photographers.

The last that Paul had been drinking and that Fayed and his son were not wearing seatbelts were cited as contributory factors.

"I'm a father who has lost his son and I've done everything for 10 years," Al Fayed told ITV News television in an interview Tuesday.

"But now with the verdict I accept it, but with reservations." He said he thought that the coroner had not allowed the jury to explore all the potential causes for the couple's death, and has said in the past that the fatal crash was in fact part of a conspiracy to stop the princess from marrying his son, a Muslim.

However, the coroners ruled out the possibility of a murder verdict, saying there was simply "not a shred of evidence" to support such claims.

"I have [had] enough. I'm leaving the rest for God to get me revenge. I'm not doing anything more ... this is the end," Al Fayed

AL FAYED

went on to say.

He added: "Enough is enough." Dr. Michael, Dennis two sons, Princess William and Prince Harry they accepted the verdict, while Prince Minister Gordon Brown added his voice earlier on Tuesday, before Al Fayed's interview was broadcast, to those appealing for people to finally abandon the conspiracy theories.

"I think the Princes, William and Harry, have spoken for the whole country when they say this is time to bring this to an end," he told Sky News television.

He said it would continue to pursue the coroner's inquest, which had to have another to run of this, as I think it's important that we draw a line," Al Fayed told ITV that his lawyers had told him there were still legal avenues worth pursuing, and among them, his spokesperson Michael Cole said Sky News earlier, were the fact that the jury had not heard evidence from Queen Elizabeth II or from her husband Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh. AFP

SOUTH Korean Confucianists wearing traditional costumes cast their ballots in the general elections in Hoengsu, about 190 km south of Seoul on April 9.

Conservative party headed for victory in South Korea polls

SEOUL—SOUTH KOREANS turned out Wednesday to elect a new parliament, with the pro-government party of new President Lee Myung-bak expected to win the majority it needs to pass sweeping economic reforms.

Voting started at 6 a.m. at more than 13,000 polling stations across the country of 49.3 million people. They were to close at 6 p.m., with official results expected around midnight.

Opinion surveys suggest a big win for Lee's Grand National Party (GNP) over its liberal rival, the United Democratic Party (UDP).

Lee, a former CEO who came, paigned on an "Economy, First" platform, won a landslide victory in last December's presidential poll.

His GNP wants to create a majority in parliament to enact business-friendly reforms aimed at rejuvenating Asia's fourth largest economy after a decade of relatively modest growth under liberal presidents.

Lee and his party also pledge to get tougher with recalcitrant North Korea after a 10-year "sunshine" engagement policy—a premise which has enraged Pyongyang.

That has already sparked some angry rhetoric from the North against Lee's government, although analysts say it is unlikely to sway voters from his party.

But the GNP's support is expected to be eroded by a frothing short for Lee's new administration and fierce factional fighting within the party, with many opposed would-be candidates breaking away.

The UDP, currently the second largest party, is nevertheless tipped to win around 100 seats to the 299-member National Assembly.

The UDP at present the majority party, has contended to contest win but it wants to secure 100 seats, which would allow it to block any moves to change the constitution. Polls suggest it may not achieve even that. AFP

The WORLD

Edna Lawrence B. Cuaso

FOOD RIOTS

Hungry Haitians storm palace, loot shops

PORT-AU-PRINCE—UN PEACEKEEPERS USED RUBber bullets and tear gas to chase away hungry Haitians who stormed the presidential palace on Tuesday demanding the resignation of President Rene Preval. The riots over soaring food prices turned into looting as terrified residents huddled inside.

The angry protesters tried to break into the presidential palace Tuesday morning by charging its chained gates with a rolling dumpster, demanding Preval step down.

"We are hungry! He must go!" they cried.

Preval, a soft-spoken leader backed by Washington, was inside the palace at the time, aides said. He has made no public statements since the riots began last week.

Brazilian soldiers in blue UN helmets arrived on jeeps and armored vehicles, forcing the protesters away from the palace gates. But as the protests turned into looting, the commissioned peacekeepers only watched as people broke into shops around the palace.

After dark, the looting spread. People broke into stores and factories on a road to the airport, witnesses said, amid blackouts organized from Prival's office to set up checkpoints to detain looters and halt the looting. Frightened residents barricaded themselves behind locked doors.

On one rain-drenched street, a group of men surrounded a slowmoving car and tried to drag its driver through the window. She appeared to get away.

The US Embassy suspended visa services and routine operations Wednesday because of the violence, and advised Americans in Port-au-Prince and Les Cayes to remain indoors. Embassy buildings were pelted with rocks Tuesday but there were no reports of injuries to US citizens.

Food prices, which have risen 40 percent on average since mid-2007, are causing unrest around the world. But nowhere do they pose a greater threat to democracy than in Haiti, one of the world's poorest countries where in the best of times most people struggle to fill their bellies. -AP

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Top US general calls for halt to Iraq troop cuts

WASHINGTON—THE TOP US GENERAL IN Iraq on Tuesday called for US troop withdrawals to be frozen for at least 45 days after July, warning military gains remained fragile and accusing Iran of seeking to stoke violence.

Gen. David Petraeus recommended to US lawmakers that votes the fate of the 20,000-strong troop juxtaposition Iraq have pour vote withdrawn in July "are condemned a 45-day period of consolidation and evaluation."

Dressed in his uniform with rankish adorning his chest, the four-star general warned that while security has improved, "we haven't turned any corners, we haven't seen any lights at the end of the tunnel."

"The champagne bottle has been pushed to the back of the refrigerator. And the progress, while real, is fragile and is reversible," the senior Bush appointed in Iraq, Democrats charged that Petraeus was sending a blank check to commit troops indefinitely to an unpopular war which has already claimed more than 4,000 US lives as it stretches into its sixth year.

"It seems to me what you have given to your chain of command is a plan which has no end to it," said Sen. Carl Levin, chair of the Senate Armed Services Committee. "That is a clear, open-ended pause." Petraeus was joined by the US ambassador to Baghdad Ryan Crocker in the grueling two hearings of the Senate Armed Services and Foreign Relations committees to make their first report to Congress in seven months.

"While security has improved in many areas, and the Iraqi security forces are shouldering more of the load, the situation in Iraq remains exceedingly complex and challenging," he summed.

US forces, which invaded the country in March 2003, could face a resurgence of al-Qaida in Iraq, or see more fighting with the Shiite militias such as those led by radical cleric Moqtada al-Sadr, he said.

"External actors, like Iran, could stoke violence within Iraq and actions by other neighbors could undermine the security situation as well," he added. -AFP

Polygamist sect groomed kids to accept sex

ELDORADO—A TEXAS POLYGAMIST compound emptied of more than 400 children was the site of pervasive sexual abuse where girls were groomed to accept sex at puberty and boys were indoctrinated to perpetuate the cycle, officials said in court records released on Tuesday.

Girls as young as 13 were "spiritually married" to men in their 50s, moved between rooms and were forced to have sex with their significantly older husbands "for the purpose of having children," according to an affidavit by an investigator with the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.

Children were deprived of food and forbidden to dream as presidents, and sexual beatings were also reported on the sprawling YFZ Ranch for Davis Ranch outside of Eldorado, Texas owned by the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

A number of young girls who were pregnant or had recently given birth were discovered on the ranch after a desperate call for help was made by a 16-year-old girl.

In a series of subsequent calls to a Colorado County sheriff's deputy, the girl told a local family violence center that she was being held against her will on the compound and was told she would be "bound and bonked up" if she tried to leave.

The girl said she began to be abused soon after she was left at the ranch by her parents about three years ago and is age 17 because she is struck with of a 49-year-old man. -AP

WHAT'S INSIDE
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Coca-Cola, Purefoods down foes

LAMEX TABOSHOW (Answers Collected)
Kelly in — Pachabuhay Talk '08 Host
Tiffany in — Anderson Reporter

By Marong R. Candila

AMONG WELCOAT'S SEASON-HIGH 14 STRAIGHT losses, this one will linger with the Dragons for a long, long while.

After opening the most of the way and looking primed for a first victory in close to five months, Welcoat lost control in the stretch and allowed Coca-Cola to take a 98-96 victory last night for the 2008 Philippine Cup lead at the Araneta Coliseum.

Rookie Renjoy Barroso drilled the go-ahead triple with 15.4 seconds left and then had a key steal a few seconds later as the Tigers, even with potential super import George Gervin Jr. on standby, won for the third straight time.

"I told them that we need to sacrifice a lot and be committed so that we can be somebody once the day is done," Coca-Cola coach Bitoy Simin said after his team had to battle back from an many as 16 points down in the second period.

"Welcoat is a tough team, such was no secret and all," Bitoy added. "I am just glad that we got lucky in the end."

Barroso and Purefoods backer the loss of import Darius Rice to hammer out a come-from-behind 102-99 victory over ABS.

KELLY Williams of Sta. Lucia tries to thread the double-team of Magnolia's Mike Cortez (left) and Danny Seigle (right) in their game Sunday night. The Realtors defeated the Beverage Masters, 89-86.

YAP

WILLIAMS

ALAPAC

Yap draws highest All-Star vote total

IT IS NOT FITTING THAT THE top vote-getter of the 2008 PBA All-Star game will be wearing his teams in front of his province mates.

Purefoods' James Yap gathered the highest number of votes among all players selected to compete both the starting units of the North and South squad scoring series in the All-Star weekend in Bacolod City on April 26-27.

It will be the fifth straight starting nod slot for Yap, who hails from a neighboring town in Escalante, since entering the league in 2006.

The 2005-2006 Most Valuable Player was the runaway choice as one of two starting guards for the South team, raking in 58,763 in the voting process that ran from Feb. 1 to April 6.

He's the only player to breach the 50,000 mark.

Trailing Yap are fellow South players Kelly Williams of Sta. Lucia and Magnolia Beverages Mavericks Danny Seigle. Williams, the season's leading MVP contender, amassed 36,930 votes while Seigle got 38,448 as they lead their team's frontcourt rotation.

Completing the roster for the South team are Ginebra's Eric Menk (36,511) and Jimmy Alapag of Talk 'N Text (22,752).

Do-it-all Magnolia forward Marc Pingris meanwhile, emerged the last favorite to lead the North All-Stars, securing second of 20,078 votes.

ABC5 backing out of PBA TV bidding

By Marong R. Candila

ABC5, THE PHILIPPINE BASKETball Association's television partner for the last five years, will not join the bidding to renew its broadcasting rights after reportedly pegged at the way the league is handling the process.

A very reliable source told the Inquirer last night that high-ranking executives of the TV outfit finished setting a letter they will send to the league after feeling that they are not getting a fair shake in the proceedings.

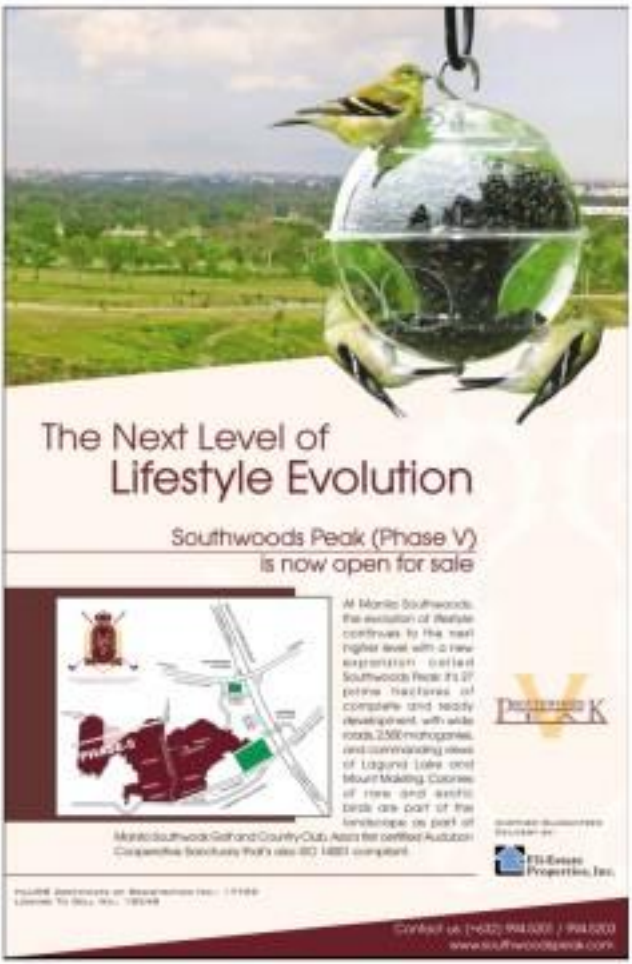
The source, who spoke on the condition that he is not identified, said that ABC5 received an invitation to bid from the PBA very recently, which gave it very little time to prepare.

Signed by its president, Bobby Barrera, the letter was supposed to reach the Commissioner's Office and then Tony Chua of Bell Bell late last night, with the television network to make a formal announcement today.

Officials who handle the television coverage of the league were also to inform their respective people of the network's decision after last night's double-header at the Araneta Coliseum in Cubao.

ABC5 was supposed to have passed its first bid last Tuesday, but since there were "too points of reference to guide the bid, we had no basis on what to give the league," said the source.

The television network will reportedly carry the league's crossover totaling P70 million this year, the final season of its contract with the league.



Hapee battles Pharex today

By Mac Anthony Bayas

HAPEE TOOTHPASTE IS BACK ON its feet and now wants revenge against one of the teams that dealt the Complete Protectors a loss in the first round.

The Complete Protectors are riding on a three-game winning run which they hope to hamstring against the Pharex Medics, who handed them a 100-95 reunion in the first round of the 2008 PBL Open-Conference Sports Cup in the Arena in San Juan.

During that first meeting, Jerry Cruz was struggling in his role with the Complete Protectors and veteran playmaker Eugene Tan was still in his first supervisory stint.

Hapee coach Louie Alas is now lauding the improvements in his team, especially with the way Cruz is handling his leader role with aplomb.

The GSAP MVP from University of Santo Tomas has been the pillar of the Protectors' strength, banging in 22 points in their 100-89 rout of Burger King on Tuesday that improved their record to 7-3.

"We now have a deeper bench unlike before, so we have new horse options this time," said Alas. "I just hope Jerry will continue to flourish with the team."

"I can say that this is a different team from the one Pharex had beaten three weeks ago," Alas added.

Hapee is also hoping to get the same performance from its regulars Gabe Norwood, Mark Barkley, Larry Rodriguez, Enoc Dela Isla.

The Medics will rely on first-round heroes Reckjanian Alfad, Francis Abreu and Jiro Villarosa.

In the opener of today's triple header, San Mig Coffee names its swords in its best-game (as when it goes up against Seven Seconds at 2 p.m.

The Coffee Kings have among up arms core Pharex and Hapee. They will be entering the game with a big psychological edge after an 86-66 triumph over the Gun Runners in the first round where Glen Rabaca topscored with 19 points, Ted Tenorio and JP Calma combined for 32 points to help San Mig's cause.

Eric Dela Cuesta, who returned to his rooms after playing in a Singapore league, is also a big factor in San Mig's campaign.

"Mr. Uncle Cuesta's leadership rubs off on the team," said Siaosons, who played for Cora-Cola in the pro. "It gets us really motivated."

Toyota-Otis will test the mettle of the Selda Philippine Youth at 4 p.m. The Batchoys, gearing up for the Southeast Asian Basketball championship in May, have yet to win in four games to date. With reports from Jane Navarro

EMBASON Orvea (center) of Pharex will juggle here Hapee's right defense today

So stuns Georgian GM, shares top spot

WESLEY SO

Standings after three rounds:

2 points—48 So (PH), 7 Onischenko (Ukraine), 8 Kelly Gilbert, 49 Inquiridor-Lorenzo, 9 Kotsur (Kazakhstan), 58 Zhou Zhihao, 10 Sutton (GBR), 11 Gomez (India).

2½—4 Sadorra (INP), 5 Jobando Georgiev (Ecuador), 6 Gabuzi (Georgia), 12 Bodnaruk (Romania), 13 Gomez (Paraguay), 14 Arakhamia-Grant (Georgia), 15 Antonio (India), 16 Krishnan (India), 17 Sreshtaran (Georgia), 18 Chan Chi-ho, 19 Kasimjan (Slovenia), 20 Bonjour (Saint Vincent).

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates—Filipino Grandmaster Wesley So stunned third seeded Georgian GM Levan Pantsulaia in the third round on Tuesday to share the lead in the 10th Dubai Opens chess championship at the Dubai Chess and Culture Club here.

The 14-year-old So, the country's highest rated player with an Elo of 2561, handled black superbly to thwart Pantsulaia (Elo 2617) and post his third straight win in the nine-round Swiss event that have 24 GMs and 55 IMs.

Earlier, the 16th seeded sensation from Batoon, Cavite, trounced 41st seed Ali Al-Falasi and No. 68 Hao Mao, an Elo 2450 Shy of China, respectively.

So will face No. 9 seed Giri Ahmed Adly of Egypt, who overhaul H.R. Ramesh of India, in the fourth round.

Sharing top spot with So and Adly are GMs Yuri Drozdovskij of Ukraine, Elmar Gasimov of Georgia, Pavel Eljanov of Ukraine, Vitaly Zhou of China, Saleh Salem of UAE and Abhijeet Gupta of India.

Another Filipino bet, International Master Julio Catalino Sadorra, split the point with No. 13 GM Tigran Kuzubov (ELO 2570) of Armenia in draw similar 1 hr glance with 2.5 points.

The Singapore-based Sadorra also reaps his first two matches against No. 94 Khosla Ekram of India and No. 61 David Navicut of Iran.

The prize for the tournament is $15,000, with the winner getting the lion's share of $ 6,000 and the Sheikh Rashed Bin Hamdan Al Maktoum Cup.

SPORTSWATCH

'Scholars' golf kicks off

SOME 225 INGOLOTI GTIGOENTS from the Pasig community will be the beneficiaries this year when the Rotary Club Ciudad Pasig-Capitol Hills launches its "2008 Makiisa Para Sa Estudyar" golf tournament tomorrow at the Club Intramuros Golf Course, Manila.

The tournament tees off at 8 a.m. with Ross Arnaldo G. Bagaoisan, Vice Mayor Fidel Manalo, Municipal Administrator Felix G. Angeles, Brgy. Dominique A. Cortez Jr., past president of San Fernando de Dalan and organizer Professor Santiago, chair of the 8th Makiisa golf tournament during the ceremonial tee. The unique golf fund-raising venture for public-religious scholars began in 1993.

The winners will receive P400,000 cash, Isetta Bonny Ty and George Sadorra. The 18-hole Antonio San Miguel, Mayor Royal Toronto, and Miguel Gilbert Co, Pigi Rodrigo, Eric dela Rosa, Rodney Chino, Mel Dorino, Jonnery Chang, Jerry Sy Chiong dela Cruz and Mel Zamudio.

New derby schedule

THE MTJ SPORTS AND AMUSEMENT Corp. announced yesterday the new schedule of simultaneous derbies at Makati Coliseum every Friday.

PR horsemen Gerald Go and Oscar Tan-ed said a 7-race derby will be held tomorrow with P1,200,000 in stakes for an extra fee of P2,000. Doors will be held from 10 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. while the derby starts at 6 p.m. Submission of weights is every Thursday and Friday, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

LPC 3- cock derby today

CEDOCKOFF IN PLANNED OF CAVITE, Laguna, Alcantara, Las Piñas, Parañaque and Pasay can expect 92 fights today to Las Piñas Coliseum's Sabong Derby. 3-cock derby set to start at 1 p.m.

Jacket Alcantara, Jacob Garcia (Flag Day Birthday Blessings) and Landco Dealers of Batangas (Angeline Bonyong) emerged co-champions of the inaugural 4-cock derby.

Air Relay-UST gains semifinals

AIR RELAY-UST WON RACE-TO-back games recently to secure a semis berth in Division A of the ASEAN Premier's Basketball League at the BTU gym in Mandaluyong City.

Powered by Marche Rosario, Dad Serrate, Sonic Francisco, Nikki Locsmocio and Jeanson Reena Gregorio, the Elizabeth Tan-mentored ARC-UST downed Far Eastern University-FCCE team, 79-67, before crowning Commissioner-College of St. Benilde, 79-52, for its fourth straight win.

Meanwhile, Pinoys-La Salle of coach Angelo Jose paced its first win in the tournament supported by Air Bike Corp., Team Sportswear Far Eastern Insurance, FIL, Mingo Ballstick, Ice Village, Eighty-Corporation and Shakey by beating BTU, 86-47.

Pinoys-La Salle leaned on six-8" makeover Dr. Lubiano and Scott Bandolon, who combined for 32 points, to finally barge into the win column.

Dr. DeVelot B. Pilar-020, composed of ex-varsity players from UP and Ateneo, streaked to its third straight win by dumping Dragons, 51-29. It also won over La Salle alumni 148-36) and National University (48-45).

Ayo Power-Udaya leads Brotzers Credit x 14 (record).

XBA Summer Camp April 14-25

THE SECOND MODULE OF XAVIER BASKETBALL ACADEMY's "Summer Camp III" will be held from April 14 to 25 at the St. Rafael Cristina Eguia Center of Xavier School in Greenhills, San Juan.

The camp is headed by coach Bienvie Villegas is open for boys and girls 6 years old and above. It will run Monday to Friday with two sessions: 8 to 10 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. to noon.

XBA's Module III will be from April 28 to May 9, while Module IV from May 12 to 23.

For inquiries, 7264810 or 7373078

Father-son Perez tandem wins

ROSARIO, BATANGAS—The father-son tandem of Delta and Henderson Perez of Alpa Racing swept the Sunbelt 60 dist. 2008 Perez Grand Touring (GT) Championship recently at the Batangas Racing Circuit here.

Delta, a long-time racing driver, first timed the morning 12-lap Sprint race clocking 20 minutes and 48.134 to win. Jack Ford-CX Boy Pinalgan and Manny Bulday.

Later, he teamed up with son Henderson to win the premiere GT 200 class by winning the 30-lap Main Enduro Race in one hour, two minutes and 9.206 seconds.

The Perezes were one lap ahead of the runner-up pair of Francis Reyes and Jose Mendigorin who topped the GT 1.25 division with a time of 1:03:36.232 as the reprise of Mendiguren, Mendigorin yielded to Henderson in the GT 125 Sprint Race.

Pinalgan and co-driver Bruno Mendes controlled the tempo in the first seven laps until an engine problem paved the way for the Perezes to wrest the lead for good. Pinalgan and Mendes ended up with the GT 200 class crown by one lap, completing 19 laps in 49 minutes and 44.949 seconds.

The Pinalgan-Mendes duo bagged the crown in the GT 900 class over Leo Jose Jusay and third placer Quincy Bautista.

Disarray for Josephs with the Perezes was Denny Kaupang who presided in the kickoff of the 2008 Classic Cars Championship.

Kaupang drove his Ford Escort to the fastest laptime of 1:40.557 to pull ahead of the pack before claiming the checkered flag in 15 minutes and 36.140 seconds.

Marquez antics

THE DAY AFTER THE INVASION of the Araneta Coliseum, a popular scribe was talking about his encounter with Manila vendor Juan Manuel Marquez.

He said the former world champ, whose WBC super fly-weight crown was wrested by our own Manny Pacquiao in San Miguel Inn Manila, came to Muntinlupa to visit relatives of GAD-ist Rey Pascua-Rizon, to watch the Grey Pelicans/Summerhal Ice Vitapin fight last Sunday. (This one later on disposed his other quarters though, claiming that it was a television network who had invited Marquez. The network is reportedly very interested in using the sons Pacquiao-Marquez reunite bout.)

The scribe only watched awed and impressionless Ice Marquez.

Describing him as "very receptive", he said the Mexican boxer was very friendly and likeable. There were many Filipinos hovering around him for his autograph and his photograph than there are Ice Pacquiao, who has a fight on his contract around him, the scribe said.

Note: after the rude remark and the challenge he made to Pacquiao in front of his ambulyans, the scribe continued to admire Marquez.

"You know you lost that fight to Lee Vitagan," Marquez told Pacquiao to his face at the Araneta Coliseum. "But he gave us rematch so I am positive that he is the rightful champ by agreeing to a third match. The reason to the fight could be signed right now," Marquez said.

* * *

While the scribe found Marquez's antics acceptable, businessman-sportsman Hermie Esguerra, who is a close friend of Pacquiao, deem exception.

"What Marquez said was foul. As a Filipino I feel offended with what he did. He humiliated Manny in front of his Ambulyanon right here in Manny's own turf."

In effect, Hermie said Marquez is also questioning the integrity of the three judges, the World Boxing Council and the promoters.

"Look, I watched Manny's first fight with Marquez and as far as I'm concerned, Manny won that match. But the judges ruled a draw and we all accepted the decision.

"If it was God's will that the belt go to the Mexican boxer then he should have won," said the prominent racehorse owner.

* * *

Will somebody please explain to me why the ladies national youth basketball team was excluded from the 1995 million sponsorship package undertaken by Tan Corporation for the BMP/BPO youth program?

As far as I know, the main beneficiaries of this multimillion package which is good for three years are the men's 'old' youth team and the then-national MBTC (National Basketball Training Center) of Jim Altamirano which includes Benjie Paras. So it couldn't be gender discrimination.

But a single centavo has been allotted to the girls' team which is a big puzzle. In Malaysia for example, Petronas supports both boys and girls youth teams.

But why totally ignore the women's youth team? They need transportation fare to attend practices, games regularly and they need medical care if injured, just like the boys.

Surely there will be enough money left to go around even if they allot a small amount for the needs of the girls' team, which is a drop in the bucket.

I should have mentioned Mr. Jun Ilyong, president of Corporacion, the biggest Honda distributor in the Philippines, when I met him during the MBPC launch at the Makati Sports Club some months ago. However, nobody knew at the time that the girls' team was not part of the budget expansion.

Cynthia Tia, godmother of the 16 ladies who form the squad, should not have been saddled with a second team to support if only the juniors get a little help from the more moneyed sponsors.

* * *

The first thing Mikee Romero did at the closing ceremonies of The Athletes Scales was type 8600 for president Mariano Pangilinan's "speak-a-phone."

"We will not host against two big imports. Succeeded against Malaysia but succumbed to the ever-taller Indonesia," read the message.

Even evildoer Juan Flavier, Mikee said the host should not. "But the Hong Kong referee kept calling it against us every time the local was cut down to size pa more."

Mikee, who have losing, has charged the Scales fiasco to experience. "I know what to do the next time. It won't happen again," he vowed.

In Huddle

Beth Celis

Hong Kong officials may shorten Olympic torch route

HONG KONG—HONG KONG AUTHORities may shorten the city's leg of the Olympic torch relay because of chaotic protests at earlier stops in Paris and London, local newspapers said Tuesday.

The torch relay has been marred by unprecedented protests by activists criticizing China's human rights record, its crackdown in Tibet and support for Sudan despite years of bloodshed in Darfur.

In London, protesters nearly grabbed the torch, and in Paris, Chinese security officers extinguished its flame and hustled it to the safety of nearby buses, amid rowdy protests that prompted officials to call off the last third of the relay.

Citizens ruled Hong Kong in a likely location for similarly aggressive protests because the former British colony enjoys Western-style civil liberties like freedom of protest. It also has liberal visa policies that grant visa-free access to citizens of most major Western countries.

The event's scheduled arrival in Hong Kong on April 30 is also symbolic because it marks the torch's return to Chinese soil after being transported across the world.

Gearing up for possible protests, Hong Kong authorities are considering shortening the torch's planned 33-kilometer (20-mile) relay here, newspapers Ming Pao Daily News and Apple Daily both reported.

Police officials also are considering making limit an event to celebrate the torch's last refueling plans to let Hong Kong leader Donald Tsang be the first torchbearer, Apple Daily reported.

Officials don't want to appear to have caved to possible pressure by shortening the route significantly but may condense certain sections of the relay on May 2, Ming Pao reported.

Australia divided

In Canberra, Australia, Retired swimmer Susie O'Neill, a former athlete delegate to the International Olympic Committee, says the Olympic torch relay has been hijacked by protesters and should be scrapped.

The relay is scheduled to visit Canberra on April 24, and officials have already shortened the route for security reasons. Tibetan independence activists have said they will hold protests during the Canberra leg.

"Every day everybody is talking about the Olympics but you've got bad publicity. So I'd probably just scrap it if it was me," O'Neill told Australian Broadcasting Corp. radio Wednesday.

But Australia's tourism minister Gregory Hunt, IOC vice president Kevan Gosper, and the relay that has spawned violent and widespread protests in London and Paris should continue.

"Everybody understands there is emotion around Tibet," said Gosper. "But no one can condone violent interruption."

Another former Australian swimming great, Dawn Fraser, suggested athletes should not attend the Olympics if they feel strongly enough about China's human rights record.

"That is a strong boycott within themselves. Not that they are being asked to boycott by anyone or the Olympic federation," said Fraser, who won gold in the 100-meter freestyle in three straight Olympics—1956, 1960 and 1964.

Fraser said she will not go to Beijing, marking only the second Olympics she has missed since 1956.

"I would be thinking twice about it because I feel very strongly and I support the Tibetans," Fraser said.

Five-time Olympic gold medalist Ian Thorpe, who retired from swimming in 2006, will run with the torch in Canberra.

His teammate, David Pondun, said Wednesday that Thorpe had no plans to pull out of the relay. AP

Alternative training aids high jumper

By Cedell P. Tupas
Inquirer Visayas

CAMBOANGA CITY—HIGH JUMP SPECIAList Jeanelle Castillo's alternative training method resulted wonders in his maiden stint in the National Private Schools Athletic Association Meet here.

The 20-year-old criminology student of Lyceum University in Dagupan, whose training regimen includes tapping the board of a basketball ring, topped the senior event by clearing 1.90 meters at the Joaquin Enrique Memorial Sports Complex here.

"I'm not used in jumping over the [high jump] bar. When I jump, I just imagine that I'm touching for the basketball ring," he told the bayanan.

CASTILLO

The 5-foot-10 Castillo looked comfortable amid inclement conditions, finding only rain on route to the gold. He took a crack at the 1.95 m mark once, before giving up, saying he wanted to preserve his energy for the long jump event.

Castillo, women's high jump champion Bayani Mendez (1.60 m) of Calabanoan and men's shotput ruler Darren Calanoren (12.01 m) of Region XII were the survivors of a scoring binational Capital Region summit on day one of the 19th edition of the meet.

NCR, whose members were culled from LA-SAC Baguio, University of Santo Tomas, University of the East and De Ateneo, reaped five golds, two silvers and two bronzes.

BEACH VOLLEYBALL

UV nears national finals

By Jasmine N. Paya

BACOLOD CITY—THE ELITE Visayas teams moved within a win of a return trip to the 2008 Sixers Beach Volleyball national competition.

Reigning national women's champion University of the Visayas and runner-up Southwestern University romped unbeaten yesterday to march into the Final four of the Visayas elimination round at the University of St. La Salle Bacolod here in Negros Occidental.

Foundation University and University of Southern Philippines Foundation, both unvanquished in the meet's side bet year, also remained on a roll to gain a share of the lead.

Only the top three teams in each division, along with the Luzon and Mindanao representatives, will advance to the national grand finals on April 23 to 26 in Boracay.

Highly favored for a second straight title, the UV pair of Jenny Ann Igot and Anabelle Carillo believe there's still room for improvement following a 21-15, 21-15 victory over University of St. La Salle Bacolod's Sheryl Anne Jimilla and Jovie Joy Solis.

"We want to defend our crown, so we have to improve our techniques, like how to place the ball well," said Igot, a senior board and women's management student from Mandaue City Colleges.

The 2007 tandem of Jeanlle Talisic and Hailan Gutierrez also romped on University of Southern Philippines Foundation's Shelene Pinlac and Rilie Camille Verano, 21-15, 21-11, for their second straight victory.

In the men's division, PUs Rolando Agas and Ismel Amadeo rose from a set down to turn back University of San Agustin's Allan Dagang and Merlin Paul de Ocampo, 18-21, 21-16, 15-9.

Agas and Amadeo, both natives of Dumaguete, seamlessly smashed, USJR's backcourt to claim the second set, 21-16, and forge a decider amid a rainy afternoon.

PU's crowd pleaser in the men's eventside best pros opened with a 5-2 lead and reached match point, 14-0, with an Agas hit in the final frame. Another hit by Agas, a junior accountancy student, sealed PU's second straight victory.

"We had a hard time when it rained, we couldn't jump well," the 19-year-old Amadeo said.

FLORIDA Graduates of Southwestern University dress for a return while roommates Jeanelle Tabac looks on.

James Ryan Rivera and new partner Jeremy Saaing of USPF fourth placer in last year's nationals, took advantage of the late game blunders of University of San Jose Recoletos' Ariel Caramba and Lenjel Tippo for a 21-13, 21-19 triumph.

USPF earned match point, 20-18, following Caramba's service error, while a floating hit wrapped up the straight-set victory.

Attack errors by the ensemble assistive USJR allowed the USPF tandem from Ghent, Cebu to break away from a 12-11 deadlock for a 13-10 lead in the second frame.

Getting the best were Iloilo Doctors College, University of Negros Occidental-Recoletos, Colegio San Agustin Bacolod and Saint Gabriel College in the north division.

University of Iloilo earned UIMO-B, 21-15, 17-21, 15-13, while UV eliminated CSAB, 21-13, 21-13.

Colegio dela Purisima Concepcion also triumphed on IOC, 21-11, 21-4, followed by University of St. La Salle Bacolod's 21-15, 21-13 thwarting of SGC.

Similarly out of contention in the distaff side were Immaculate University, Iloilo Doctors College and University of Iloilo.

UMO-B downed IU, 21-10, 21-11, while USA subjugated IU, 21-9, 21-21.

RP Davis Cup team woos crowd support

By Musong R. Castillo

THERE'S ONE ASPECT TOGETHER phase acknowledges it has an advantage in—the crowd.

With the nominations for the first singles to happen today at 10 a.m., the Philippines hope to lean on the massive support their home crowd can give when they open their Davis Cup Asia-Oceania Group 1 qualifying tie with Uzbekistan.

"We need them, more than ever," top-playing skipper Jeremy Yerzon told the bayanan on the eve of the nominations on who will open things for the Team nation. "The crowd is our home they (Uzbeks) cannot affect."

Yerzon was having dinner with members of the team last night, where he will also give them an idea on who will start tomorrow against the Uzbeks at the Philippine Columbian Association shell courts in Pasig.

"The only thing I can tell you at this point is that this is not a two-man team," Yerzon said in giving a hint that either Patrick John Tierro or Johnny Arcilla could be tapped for early singles action.

"It's a 50/50 chance with them (the Uzbeks)," Yerzon added. "But our team has grown so much mentally in as short a time that I am confident that we can give them a good fight."

Uzbekistan, which will be led by world No. 136 Denis Istomin, played its last week, sampled the clay shell courts and got itself acclimatized.

"We didn't expect it to be this hot here," said Istomin, who has played against the likes of world No. 1 Roger Federer and Aussie top gun Lleyton Hewitt.

The Uzbeks have been practicing on a similar surface in Italy prior to flying over, targeting whatever advantage the Filipinos have.

"It's a 50/50 chance. They're DP team a tough team to beat and the hometown crowd will be their advantage. But we've prepared hard for this and we're aiming to win," Istomin said.

The Philippines last vs Uzbekistan, 0-5, when they first clashed 11 years ago.

Cool Mentik, Jim Yano and Co. will come into this tie 0-5 losers to Japan.

LISTEN Ace Davis booster

AP'S JOHNNY Arcilla

Southwoods Invitational starts today

THE MANILA SOUTHWOODS GOLF AND Country Club is out to lure its most number guest events starting today giving out more than P2 million in prizes.

Topping the long list of prizes for the four-day competition is the grand prize of the Masters and Legends courses of Manila Southwoods are a 2008 Mitsubishi Lancer GLXS/T, a Mont-san-Riviera Cruise and Sentosa-Bata tickets and Los Angeles-via Korean Airlines.

About 500 members and guests are set to brave the soaring heat to join the hunt for the prizes and enjoy the perks of a tournament prepared by the board of directors headed by its pres. Bob Delangcuban, the standing committees and management.

To be contested in the two-man team, 36-hole modified Stableford scoring competition are the low gross and low net team awards and four handicap classes (Class A for 0-9 handicap, Class B for 10-15, Class C for 16-21 and Class D 22-27). The team-contributing cheer rule will be strictly implemented.

The Lancer courtesy of Mitsubishi Motors Phils. Corp. and Diamond Motors Corp., the Montesa-Honda cruise put up by Royal Caribbean International and the Bowen Air tickets will all be raffled off if they're not won on the course as rewards for a hole-in-one.

Also at stake are an eight-day seven-night Asian Cruise in Imperial suites for two courtesy of Travel Caribbean International, P100,000 worth of non-cashable chips from Pagcor, and a golf set from Wilson Sports.

The major sponsors are Southwoods Stak, Mizuno, Golf Pacific, Hot Asia Mobile, Golden Oats, Manila Jockey, Fitzgill, Gargoyle Inc., Watford Security Services, Wilson Sports, the 21 and Body Project Hulo Inc.

New bike slows Aguilar in Superbikes

THE COUNTRY'S PERENNIAL MOtocross champion Glenn Aguilar of Yellow Cub-Ducati-Accion Plus showed his mettle in road racing recently, pulling through with two runner-up finishes in the kickoff of the 2008 Shell Advance Superbikes Championships at the Batangas Racing Circuit.

Though his newly designed Shelow Cub-Ducati bike was fresh from the showroom and not been fully tuned, Aguilar, owner of 32 motocross titles—11 in the Pro 20 and 11 in the Pro250, managed to put up a good fight against defending champion Mauro Bancio in the Open class.

"The bike was finished just before the qualifying race Saturday and we haven't had it for brake-in yet and we hadn't tuned the suspension for the racetrack," said Aguilar.

AGUILAR setbacks cross the finish line.

Global City run draws backers

JPI GENERAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (JPI), FORGE CLIMATE TRIATHLON SET'S FORT Bonifacio Development Corporation for the staging of the Bonifacio Global City Run Plus slated for April 20, 2008. JPI divisionales Dimana Mina Ante, whose running mate will be assisted the race. Registration for the event is being accepted on the ground floor of the Vasquez-Rodrigo Plaza Bldg. at No. 11 Annapolis St. in Greenhills. San Juan and at the Bella store on 8th Ave. cor High Street in the Bonifacio Global City and at the Dimana Mall in Lilua. Registration fee is P500. Last day of registration at the Ante store is on April 18, while registration in Greenhills ends on April 18. For inquiries, call 722 9888.

SPORTS

INTENSE ACTION: Portland Trail Blazers players (from left) LaMarcus Aldridge, Travis Outlaw and Channing Frye angrily confront the Los Angeles Lakers' Lamar Odom (center) after the latter's flagrant foul on Portland star Brandon Roy. Referee Bob Delaney and Pau Gasol (right) try to break up the melee. AFP

UTAH Jazz forward Carlos Boozer (right) harrels into New Orleans Hornets guard Chris Paul and is called for an offensive foul. AP

Jazz stop Hornets' run, clinch division

NEW ORLEANS—THE UTAH JAZZ ENDED THE NEW ORLEANS HORNETS' 11-game home winning streak with a 77-66 victory over the Western Conference leaders on Tuesday.

Mehmet Okur's 22 points and 17 rebounds and a strong defense helped the visiting Jazz clinch their second consecutive Northwest Division title.

The awesome also pulled the rifle last Antonio Spurs within a game of the Hornets to the right Western Conference race.

The victory was the fourth in a row for Utah and ended New Orleans' five-game winning streak in all games as well as the long home run.

Jazz guard Deron Williams played a pivotal role in the triumph, handing out 10 assists and outplaying Hornets' leader Chris Paul.

Paul, who was averaging 21.5 points, scored only four points, all in the second half, as he missed nine of 11 shots.

Peja Stojakovic led New Orleans with 13 points and David West added 14.

"It was the first time in a long time that I can remember that we just couldn't make shots on a consistent basis," Hornets coach Byron Scott told reporters.

"You have to give them credit on defense, but we just couldn't knock down the shots."

The Hornets had been hoping for a three-game sweep. Still, regular-season victory but that quickly ended when Utah held them to 11 points in the second quarter and their lowest game total of the season.

The Jazz scored only nine points in the first 8 quarter but by their 16-point halftime de at the Hornets evaded by 13 going into the final 12 minutes.

In other games, it was Indiana 111, Atlanta 99; Charlotte 121, Minnesota 110; Miami 95, Chicago 90; Phoenix 127, Memphis 113; Boston 107, Milwaukee 104; OT; New York 98, Detroit 94; Dallas 99, Seattle 83; Portland 112, LA Lakers 103; Denver 117, LA Clippers 99; Golden State 140, Sacramento 132.

In Los Angeles, Carmelo Anthony scored 36 points, Allen Iverson added 25 points, seven rebounds and nine assists, and Denver routed the Clippers, 117-99, to keep pace in the Western Conference playoff race.

Linas Kleiza added 15 points, Marcus Camby had 11 points and 18 rebounds, and JR Smith scored 10 points for the Nuggets (47-31).

In Oakland, California, Baron Davis had 35 points and nine assists, Stephen Jackson added 26 points, and Golden State stayed in the hunt for the Western Conference playoff race with its highest scoring game of the season, a 140-132 overtime win over the Sacramento Kings.

Ibrahim Biodrim had 37 points and 17 rebounds for the Warriors (47-31), who are tied with the Denver Nuggets for the eighth postseason spot in the powerpacked West, where one club is certain to end up with the best record in NBA history for a non-playoff team.

At Huntington scored 17 points and Shona Ellis had 16 as Golden State never trailed in its third win in four games against its Northern California rivals.

In Indianapolis, Mike Dunleavy scored 20 points, and Indiana beat Atlanta, 111-99, to assist elimination from the Eastern Conference playoff race.

A win by the Hawks would have knocked the Pacers from playoff contention, and Atlanta would have needed just one win or a Sers Jersey loss the rest of the way to clinch a berth. Instead, the Pacers are just two games behind the Hawks for the eighth spot with four games left.

In Portland, Oregon, Brandon Roy scored 23 points and matched his career high with 12 assists, as the Trail Blazers held off the Los Angeles Lakers, 112-103.

Lakkiman Aldridge had 22 points and 11 rebounds for Portland, which snapped a five-game losing streak. Channing Frye had a season-high 22 points and 11 rebounds.

Kobe Bryant finished with 34 points, while Pau Gasol had 21 points and 13 rebounds. It was the Lakers' sixth straight loss at the Rose Garden. Reuters, AP

Illam ends Lipa's upset run

DEFENDING MAJOR LEAGUE champion International Little League Association of Manila (ILLAM) cut short Lipa City's glass-falling quest with an 11-8 triumph yesterday at the start of the Final 19 boardings in the 11-12 boys baseball division of the 2008 Little League Philippine Series at the Alabang Country Club grounds.

The boys from the Illam stable, who topped Group E of the 10-team, six-group eliminations, had to come up through with a five-run binge at the bottom of the fifth inning to hand the Lipa nats their first loss following a five-game run in Group C of the early round.

Group D top qualifiers and host Muntinlupa City edged Tarusan, 12-11, to share the early lead with Illam in the race for berths in the Final Four of the Little League Museum's centerpiece division.

The Illam Big Leaguers likewise flexed their muscles in their side-attraction find of the 14-16 boys baseball play by thrashing Tuliwa City of Negros Occidental, 9-1.

However, Illam's Big League outfielders suffered their second setback in an ninety days following a nine-inning 2-1 loss to Bacolod City East.

Fernalen Dorio, who recorded five as a base-on-balls and advanced top second on a fielder's choice, scored the winning run at the bottom of the sixth and final frame on an Elum Balding error.

Winston would score campaigner Rodo Sterio took the mound the whole of the seven-inning encounter without relief, limiting the defending titlist to two hits in that stretch.

The victory was the third for the Bacolod boys, a feat duplicated by Team Manila, which opened over Muntinlupa, 12-0.

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE	W	L	Pct	GB
x-Boston	62	13	.826	—
x-Philadelphia	38	38	.500	23
x-Toronto	38	38	.486	24
New Jersey	36	39	.480	25
New York	22	56	.282	40½
Southeast				
y-Orlando	48	29	.623	—
x-Washington	42	33	.519	5
Atlanta	36	39	.480	10½
Charlotte	33	45	.393	15½
Miami	14	64	.179	34½
Central				
y-Detroit	55	22	.714	—
x-Cleveland	42	35	.545	13
Indiana	36	44	.450	19½
Chicago	33	47	.413	22½
Milwaukee	28	51	.329	28

WESTERN CONFERENCE	W	L	Pct	GB
Southwest				
x-San Antonio	56	25	.729	—
x-New Orleans	53	19	.695	1
x-Houston	52	26	.667	3
Dallas	49	29	.628	5½
Memphis	21	57	.269	33½
Northwest				
y-Utah	52	25	.675	—
Portland	39	38	.500	13
Minnesota	19	58	.247	32½
Seattle	18	59	.234	34
Pacific				
x-L.A. Lakers	53	25	.679	—
x-Phoenix	50	29	.633	3
Golden State	47	31	.602	6
Sacramento	38	42	.475	17
L.A. Clippers	31	50	.383	24

x-clinched playoff berth, y-clinched division

TIGER Woods: Hands-down favorite.

JOHNSON

ELS

SINGH

MICKELSON

Tiger dominates Masters buzz

AUGUSTA, GEORGIA—SEVEN PLAYERS STOOD on the first tee in the morning chill of Augusta National on Tuesday, a half-dozen more waiting on the practice green behind them. They used almost 45 minutes before the course opened for practice at 8 a.m.

The quiet was shattered by the roars of Tiger Woods hitting his 3-wood off the 18th tee.

He was getting an early start before anyone in a green jacket could stop him. It was a sense that set the stage perfectly for this Masters: Tiger against the field.

Woods is a four-time Masters champion, the favorite just about every year and—even before he plays—part of that is a product of being the No. 1 player in the world for the better part of a decade. Part of it comes from having won eight of his last 13 tournaments.

And then there was that declaration that year that the absolute Grand Slam was "totally within reason."

"It'd like to bet against him, like the whole field have this week," Ernie Els said Tuesday.

Other players in the field who could contend include defending champion Zach Johnson and past champions Fijay Singh and Phil Mickelson.

Woods has spoken openly about his odds of winning the Grand Slam, even before his first tournament of the year, and he was asked if anything has happened in the last three months to change his outlook.

"No," Woods said, seeking for the stickers to duck before explaining.

"You have to understand why I said that," Woods said. "Because I've done it before. I've won all four in a row. The majority of my owners ... I think this is my 12th or 13th season out here—nine of those years, I've won five or more tournaments. So I've just got to win the right four. That's what it boils down to."

AP

Surprise pacesetters in Jungolf qualifier

TIDUS MASTERS, CAVITE—RENMAE Reyes and Beverly Mendoza upstaged the favored bets in Class A play at the start Tuesday of the Samsung Jungolf Tour's Callaway Junior World championships leg at the Sherwood Hills Golf and Country Club here.

Reyes carded a 74 to go one up on Vhalen Esquivel and three ahead of Ari Arbolo in the boys' 15-17 years competition. Eighth-regarded John Kirr Abalos limped home with 80 at the challenging Jack Nicklaus-designed course.

Mendoza assembled a 76 that was good for a one-stroke lead over Sunshine Ramaquiel and Louise Manalo in girls' section while Shajane de Guzman threw back-to-76.

Fiona Fung and Kevin Cecilio took a one-stroke lead to boys Class B while Stelle Uy-ten (76) and Mary Legaspi (80) occupied the top two slots in the girls side on the first 36 holes of a 108-hole qualifier for the Junior World's date July in California.

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LIFESTYLE
Editor Thelma Sioson San Juan
MONDAY ARTS & BOOKS • TUESDAY FITNESS • WEDNESDAY 2BU • THURSDAY FOOD • FRIDAY FASHION & BEAUTY

6 foodies' mouthwatering guide

Their fave restos

By Margo C. Enriquez
Contributor

IT'S A BIRTHRIGHT TO BE A FOODIE about food," says Katrina Ponce Enrile, CEO of Jaka Corp. Dives with Nancy Reyes-Lazatin, editor in chief of Cook Magazine, who goes not just a once-in-a-blue moon but "a whopper" of restaurant-adventures.

Enrile usually dines with chef Ed Quimson and close friends who like to check out new places and food at the same time.

Lazatin started off with the Thursday Club composed of people from the hospitality industry many years ago. Today she joins her many groups, one of which meets on a boat trip on Bangkok.

In friends' homes, the cooking and eating are common. In smaller groups, they eat in any district along the Maningning area such as the Metrowalk's restaurants.

Accessories designer and civic worker Peyee Weyee Ong lists her "special eating club" (composed of faces you see in the society pages) and is a member of the Ladies' Branch of the International Wine and Food Society (IWFS).

"The informal eating group started with trying out new restaurants, now they host meals at home.

Budget's host Mario Katigbak has an eating group composed of guys from the gym. "The only one on that we can use," he chuckles.

Architect Lorenzo Cubias goes out with the "old boys" every Friday.

Ever since Michel Lhuillier became president of the Philippine chapter of the Chaine de Rotisseurs, the membership has doubled.

With so many new dining places running up, these foodies have their all-time favorites. Some of them such as Enrile and Lhuillier, were restaurateurs and are sympathetic about their biases.

Katrina Ponce Enrile, CEO of Jaka Corp.

I can't say that I have a favorite restaurant. It is more of ordering favorite dishes in those places. I like to go to Kanglora for its Spicy Fusu Sashimi and the delicious oysters. Bob Kan's Kari Yagi of Yagi, for then everything you order at Yagi is good. Red also has very good Sushi which I just love.

» FOODIES C3

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Fish with tomato-onion relish

By Norma Chikiamco
Contributor

FISH CAN SOMETIMES TASTE boring. A good way to perk it up is serving it with a salad of tomatoes and onions enhanced with a lot of chicken broth, green onions and parsley. Not only does this add visual appeal, it can also transform a dish that's too bland to one that's seven stars.

Fish Fillet with Tomato-onion Relish

1 whole fillet of white fish such as dapa-lapu or mayo-mayo
1-2 calamansi
Salt and pepper
3 tbsp all-purpose flour
½ c cooking oil
Hot tea kettle
1 tbsp olive oil
½ c chopped onions
½ c chopped tomatoes
½ c chicken broth cube
½ c hot water
½ c chopped green onions
2 tbsp chopped parsley
Salt and pepper to taste

Marinate fish fillet in juice of calamansi for about 15 minutes.

Season with salt and pepper then sprinkle lightly on both sides with flour.

Heat cooking oil in a skillet and sauté fish over medium heat about 3-4 minutes on each side, or until fish is fully cooked. Transfer to a serving platter and cover with foil to keep warm.

Prepare the relish:

Heat olive oil in a skillet. Sauté onions until soft then add tomatoes and continue cooking for about one minute or just until tomatoes are tender.

Dissolve the broth cube in hot water and pour into skillet. Simmer about 1-2 minutes.

Mix in green onions and parsley and season to taste with salt and pepper. Serve with the fish fillet.

THE AUTHOR is a Palanca Award winner, author of many best-selling cookbooks and former editor-in-chief of Food Magazine.

COOK'S TIPS

Do not marinate the fish longer than 15 minutes so the acidity doesn't break down the protein in the fish.

The tilapia products are difficult to find in the fish section and keeps it from sticking to the pan.

Fish is fully cooked if it flakes easily when pressed with a fork. It should not look glassy.

For best results, make sure the fish is very fresh. Buy whole fish in the market and have the vendor fillet it for you. When you reach home, clean the fish well, removing any remaining fish bones. Keep in the refrigerator until cook the same day.

If not cooking the fish the same day, wrap it tightly with plastic wrap and store in an airtight container. Keep in the freezer and thaw in refrigerator for several hours before cooking.

Makes two to three servings.

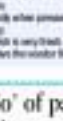
'Halo-halo' of past and present summers

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO avoid all the summer heat?

Have a halo-halo!

In Tod, Batangas, my guide Linda's house is always the first stop. Not only because she lives there but also because she feeds me with delicious halo-halo! In the place, it was called a huge bowl of assorted sweet delicacies topped with ice.

COUNTRY COOKING
Micky Fonacier



The name was just the ordinary kind, what is called commercially as "regular" without the special toppings of ube halaya and leche flan. I think what made it memorable was the novelty of eating under a tree near the makahiya carabaos.

When my children were younger, weekends brought their aunts, uncles and cousins to our house. Summer vacations (or plenty nearly sold) crashed or by the rack, we always had a halo-halo marienda.

I prepared just of the ingredients bought from the supermarket. I don't think anyone actually makes halo-halo entirely thing from scratch, save for the patience. There was the required evaporated milk, without which a halo-halo can never be authentic.

My sisters and I would sometimes argue over the kind of fruit we liked the most kids. My parents used to play rhubarb bowling with friends in one of the Quezon Ave. hotels inside the University of the Philippines campus. We kept quiet throughout the rhubarb bowling contest as we knew we would be treated to the best sodas yet at the Little Quiapo concession.

I loved everything in it, but no sugar and just a little milk. My brother didn't like the macapuno and nata (coconut) because the felt they were always sour. One piece preferred mine corn halo. Another one would order the regular ball glass, but what she really yearned for was halo-halo that would be food only on the shores of Bauang, La Union, one fine's hometown.

In a makeshift stand in the late afternoon of our annual vacation in Bauang, the vendor at the beach would concoct her halo-halo that's a little different. A little mango, a little cooked cube, a little watermelon and...for my sister, the best ingredient of the mix...sister nerbie.

I don't know if the younger generation knows that pandan is fruit. It looks like a big rice straw. Its inside is almost yellow and with the same inches seeds that need to be scraped off. I never liked it because the meat was cottony (inedible) and bland.

But my sister will yammer for it and regrets not being able to find the variety in the market.

Aning's Carinderia

In Cavite recently where my weight is an issue and photograph some of the food, we visited a restaurant where we requested very good authentic Catholic cooking some years ago.

It was great to see owner Aning Lim again in his carinderia. Ms. Aning's carinderia after this fire also started it.

The stands had become bigger and nicer although you'd have to sit near an electric fan to be cooled. We ate blank squid pencil, tinapang and bocaloc, grilled, really until cooked dried (dehydrated instead of cod. We were also there for dessert, and the halo-halo scene beckoned.

Aning didn't want to place the halo-halo in tall glasses because he said it's easier to mix everything in individual bowls. I counted 16 ingredients for the mix, and most of those are what you could find in many places: sago and gulaman, mango, white beans, nata de coco, kaong, camote, pinipig, macapuno, garbanzos, ube and langka. He even had a "secret ingredient" special version of the halo-halo, which eliminated all the beans.

The addition of camote and yema made the dish different, although the toppings of the special are still ube halaya and leche flan. Even, Aning said, was what he substituted for pastillas de leche—something he probably learned from teaching about Pampanga's halo-halo. It's also necessary he can't get a steady supply of the milk candy.

Two versions of Pampanga halo-halo are known for their extra ingredients of pastillas de leche. These can be found in Kabigting of Arayat, and Lazatin in Angeles.

It is Rizon's (but has caught the fancy of the Metro Manila market, having been successfully franchised in many commercial areas. Contrary to Cavite's Filipino halo-halo of several toppings, Rizon's of Guagua, Pampanga—only has three ingredients: tinidor, white beans and boiled, fine cuts bare of sugar.

But the glue for many of its fans is its fine crushed ice—beautifully soft and so cool, nothing to the mouth together with the natural milk.

For the Pampanga halo-halo phone, just ask around the area. Use Aning Carinderia and Cafe only in two places, so you must look for Tony Gan's Aning on 712 E Diosdado St. in Carmel, Carmona City.

JUST two of the 16 ingredients of Aning's halo-halo

To-die-for scones

I LOVE BEING A CHEF BECAUSE that means that I am surrounded by friends who also happen to be chefs themselves.

And by sweet virtue of friendship, they have given me the right to be their guinea pig.

Last week, the task was not gung-poya. The task was sans, plo—to sample some luscious three-way tea scones.

Traditional English: Assorted Tea Sandwiches, Choice of Pastries or English Trifle & Scones-Berries Dipped in Chocolate, Scones with Clotted Cream Served with Orange or Raspberry Jam, Tea of Choice: Organic Lemon Leaves of Chamomile, Lavender, Raspberry or Days of Earl Grey, English Breakfast, Peppermint or Green.

The Le Soufflé Way: Goose Liver Pate on Brioche, Cheese-Spinach Mushroom Soufflé, Seafood Quiche, Macarons, Chocolate Soufflé and choice of Lemon Mint or Lemon Iced Tea.

And though Lumpia, Dim Puso, Escabeche, Bistek Baka, Tinola and Sabaw sound rather ordinary, there is nothing ordinary about the way this chef prepares them.

Chef Jessie Sincioco of Le Soufflé promises to elevate the ordinary afternoon tea to a different level. I guarantee you it's a promise she'll very well keep.

She cooked my tummy and blew my mind!

The scones were out of this world. Flaky, buttery sweetness just right, and served straight off the oven. Baked fresh each and every time.

I reckon that it's only at the Queen's tea party that scones could be any better. Exquisite...complete with organic lavender tea. I bid you not when I say I've been dreaming of her scones!

Her Le Soufflé creations were good, but if there was anything that struck one that afternoon, it was how delicious Filipino food done right could really be. The flavors was exceptional, the presentation perfectly modernized!

Evident in the richness was Jessica's level of skill. The perfectly proportioned Kare-Kare recipe, executed to a T, tenderized to thickness as soft, with rope still gooey and runny.

The bistek was light and the pansit delicious. Definitely no skimping on the ingredients. Large chunks of meat and shrimp, chinkos, crunchy vegetables, noodles—it was the epitome of Filipino comfort food.

Le Soufflé will make menus available for interested customers. Call 8556543, 8903508.

I just had to get the menu recipe. Thanks, Jess, for sharing!

TO-DIE-FOR SCONES

2 c all-purpose flour
3 tbsp sugar
1 tbsp baking powder
½ tsp salt
½ c chilled unsalted butter, cut into ½-inch pieces
1 c raisins
2 eggs, divided
1 c plus 1 tbsp milk, divided

Preheat oven 450°F. Grease baking sheet with vegetable oil.

In a bowl, combine flour, sugar, baking powder and salt. With a pastry blender or two knives, cut butter into flour mixture until particles are the size of small peas. Stir in raisins. In a medium bowl, beat 2 eggs lightly with 1 cup milk.

Add to flour mixture; stir just until moistened.

On a lightly floured surface, knead dough gently. Pat or roll out the dough into a circle ½ inch thick. Using a lightly greased and floured 3-inch biscuit cutter, cut into rounds, cutting them together as little as few times as possible. Dip cutter into flour so often as necessary to keep dough from sticking. Space 1 inch apart onto prepared baking sheet. When making scones, work the dough quickly and do not overmix.

In a small bowl, combine 1 egg and 1 tbsp milk; brush onto scones. Bake 13-16 minutes or until golden brown.

Serve warm.

Le Soufflé's Jessie Sincioco rocked my tummy and blew my mind

LE SOUFFLÉ's three-way afternoon tea

Crunchy sweet n' sour chicken/pork

I've been trying to perfect my sweet and sour chicken/pork recipe and I can't seem to get the consistency right.

Also, I ate at Zenji's recently and I tried the spicy pork spareribs with spicy salt and chili. There is this distinct taste I couldn't really put my finger on. It's like it's trying to get good deep-fried pork ribs with spicy salt recipe, and I haven't found one that really matches up. Do you have a recipe I could try?

JOHN DALE QUIMPO

Hello, John! Gregorio! Joshua Tic, owner of Zong, will answer your questions and is even willing to share his spareribs recipe.

Bad news? You must wait another week for the recipe.

Mix a cup of flour with an egg and dip pork in egg. Dredge in cornstarch. Deep fry in very hot oil and drain oil.

Sorry, I forgot to give you the correct number for last week's low-sugar chocolate cake recipe: who' hotmail.com. Fax: brown eggs: Nina Cruz, 0917 8041181.

E-mail the author at rsqc@inquirer.com.ph

LAHLEVEN Foundation chefs Dario Pontalon, Paolo Sia, Jeanne Giovanco, Martin Ratsigeng and Flynn Lantin

ZAFFIN Group, UFS Phil. managing director

PINOY Lauren, UFS Phil. marketing manager

Food firm offers passion-driven services

By Irene C. Perez
Photos by Edwin Bacasmas

PASSION IS AN INGREDIENT to good food.

Unilever Foodsolutions (UFS), the food-service arm of Unilever Phil., recently launched its latest theme—"Passion Feeds Passion"—that invites customers to pass on the zeal of cooking and quality food.

"It's an outside-looking-in campaign," said Ivdey Unver, UFS Phil. managing director, in a chat event on Chelsea Bureau cast in Makati.

The UFS team believes passion is something that can be shared from the chef to the food critic, readers and diners.

"Passion is needed not just in providing products or services, it's also a philosophy to live by" said Pinky Lantrena, UFS marketing manager.

UFS has been working with major food providers since 1995. Among popular UFS brands are household names like Knorr, Lady's Choice, Best Foods, Lipton Tea and Selecta Ice Cream.

UFS offers not just soups or sauces, but practically anything the food business needs. UFS provides innovative solutions to the business needs of customers to key hotel, restaurants and fast-food joints.

"We're not just providing quality products or developing ingredients for the recipes, we also address specific needs of businesses," Unver said, and customers to key hotel, restaurants and fast-food joints.

Senior chef Joanne Giovanco heads the pack of young chefs composed of Rebecca Bruno, regional chef for culinary training and innovations Asia, Africa and Middle East (AMEA); Bonnie Wardlaw, regional area chef AMEA; Dean Woodhouse, area chef for chains Pipas Lantrin, Paolo Sia and Martin Ratsigeng, area chefs for culinary applications.

"We are involved not just in creating dishes but also in marketing. We find out what consumers want and give it to them," Limoncito said.

"We also train our sales team to speak the chef's language," so that they can communicate with the clients well. They also undergo classes so that they know exactly what's going on."

Foodies online forum

Certified foodies everywhere will be delighted with Unilever's new website.

Unilever's new website—www.unilever.com..."Where passion is always on the menu"—offers the latest on restaurants, culinary trends and family kitchen management techniques. It also has recipes contributed by the UFS chefs.

Closer to Catholic-browsed the new friendly site with such favorite food lovers (interviews and profiles), Featured articles (where you can send your own write up), Feeds (updates on current recipes), Happy Customers (testimonials), Tools of the Trade (menus, templates, directories and blueprints of kitchen layouts and tricks for newbies and pros alike).

A send-off to the National Culinary Team capped the "Passion Feeds Passion" launch. The Philippine team, with the support of UFS, will compete April 21-25 in Singapore for the Food World Asia 2008 Challenge.

The same group composed of Lee Tsegwan Mandrez Phila. chefs had bagged the gold last year in the Gourmet Team Challenge Category of the Hong Kong International Culinary Classic competition.

6 foodies' mouthwatering guide

For Thai food, I like People's Palace, especially the Prawn and Pork Relish. Most of the appetizers are fantastic, not to mention the desserts, especially the yummy lamb with cashew nuts.

At Intercon's Prince Albert Restaurant, the Steak Tartare is divine. It's not part of the menu but is easy to be prepared for you.

They have very good roast beef as well from either the evening smörgas or trolley rolled to your table. I also like Guillaume, the French restaurant at Peninsula, and Ramina serves duck confit.

Spices at Manila Peninsula serves excellent Tom Yumyg, a Thai summer dish with a delicious French twist. For Korean food, I go on Roxas Gardens. I have there Chap Chae, Kalbi Jim, Kalbi Gui, and Bi Bim Bap. They also have this raw beef served with raw egg called Yuke.

Marie Katigbak, country manager, Bulgari and Bang & Olufsen

My favorite restaurants are Shangri-La Makati's Shang Palace and Makiwaka Manila's Old Manila.

At Shang Palace, the ambiance is Old World. Cuisine: When we want to eat healthy food, we order steamed fish, sautéed vegetables and prawns, prepared the classic way.

When we want to pamper ourselves, we order sili-eye and French fries at Old Manila.

When I had a home in Tagaytay I would eat at Sandi's and Kayo's Grill. I like their Bicol Express.

Comfort items such as the weiner schnitzel at Sandi's and the inihaw na baboy and sigarilyas at Kayo's Grill.

In Cebu, we go to Chikuan. The Hainese and empahyo salad with silk and inihaw na lapu-lapu is to die for!

I also had dinner at Ahana in Mactan Island. The risotto were one of the best I've ever tasted.

For Spanish food, Spilendido Tasa, of course! Our signature dish, Paella is to Gracias (named after Kristine's mother, Cristina Cuenzbon) is prepared the old-fashioned way in a wood-fired open pit.

The desserts are mouth-watering. The Inn Maiyes, which is adapted from a Spanish cake and the Princess Diana Pudding, said to be the favorite dessert of the Queen Mother.

Good food, however, need not be expensive. Delete through the northwestern part of Luzon, through the Cagayan Valley Region and try our Bellelao's Pancit Lubugan.

It can be found from Isabela all the way to Tuguegarao. The doggerier of Gattapan in Tuguegao rivals even that of Vigan. But I have to admit that the best degrier in the country is made by Sherry's of Baler, Bicol Region.

In terms of service, I think Prince Albert is still one of the best. Thrift also provides good service. So do La Engalina at Splendido Tasa and Antonino's in Tagaytay.

Wynn Wynn Ong, designer and civic worker

For dinners, I have consistently pinned Lolo Dad, say by Adel and Ilda Manuel, at the top of my list.

Adel and Ilda twins make the perfect herbed rack of lamb, medium rare. I always request that the gargonzola (more be substituted with a muffa risotto.

Ilda would come in as a close second. I always want the "complete" experience — a balance of setting and the atmosphere of all scenes with the tickling of the palate.

Je Jute Gourmand is one of my favorite lunch places. It has the best smoked salmon and arugula salad and is also probably the best value for money.

Rendezvous sits half the battle if they have well-trained staff who know how to take care of guests.

Randal Sy-Quia makes the best pastries. Fruit tart I have tasted at Pia y Bernard in Greenbelt 3.

It's hard to beat Sala and, lately, Cars on Roxberto High Street (with chef Marlon Gleller) for presentation.

For ambience and service, Sala and Pepato both have the look that I love.

Outside Manila, I love the rest of Antonino's in Tagaytay. I love the rock of lamb and the deadly escabeche which you have to order in advance.

Lorenzo Calma, architect and sculptor

Being a Kapampangan, I like Abé in Sevendra. The late restaurateur Larry Cruz was my roommate in Magdalena.

There are similarities in our cooking. I enjoy corn soup—sliced young corn finely grounded and sweet, mixed with silk leaves.

I also enjoy Gandi in Sevendra, a Spanish-Mediterranean resto that doesn't scrimp on ingredients and serves good salads.

I enjoy the food in Claude Tayag's Bale Dutung (Manuel Hontet in Angeles, Pampanga. You have to book a week in advance because he cooks it himself.

I order the chicken-pork adobo and boiled delicacy, lechon or stuffed frogs. The frog is skinned, the head and intestines are removed but the stomach bulges because it is stuffed with ground pork, onion and tomatoes and fried to a crisp. It's a little spicy and the size is just a dollar. When you bite it, it melts in your mouth.

Arturo Luz (Pintasai Artist) and I ate at Kanil's Tagaytay. We had the best black Angus rib-eye steak in town. It melts in your mouth.

Michel Lhuillier, president of Chaine de Restaurants, Philippines

In Manila, I like Makati Shangri-La's Red. I usually order the fish sole or the sea bass.

For ambience, Prince Albert at Intercon, which also serves the best American prime ribs.

In Cebu, I'm biased about my restaurants. (The Lhuillier pay for their meals like the rest of the customers each time they eat in their restaurants.) The Sanitarium plays on classic international cuisines that are updated. The seafood is definitely prepared Brasilian-style with sauces to drink like soup.

My favorite is the sole rudaula filled with smoked salmon and spinach on salmon sauce. (The poached sea bass has undertones of fennel, fresh eggs, thyme and sautéed leaves from Lhuillier farms).

Pizza is the stylish presentation of Filipino food favorited and run by Joel del Prado. I like the designs, grilled and marinated with the restaurant's secret formula, and the authentic taste.

Preparing the bake takes three days, slowly cooked in coconut milk, coconut cream and pork.

Nancy Reyes Lumen, editor in chief, Cook Magazine

I like Katsu Shabitsu-ramen Restaurant on Dr. Lazcano Street, off Makati. A comfort zone for my husband and me because the owner is a former classmate.

We enjoy guacamole, baby romaine salad and the cheese dip, gambas, calamari, chilies prepared by chef Boon Kuhn and Neung's chaharan, crispy and laden with cholesterol. I always order the Angus Beef steak w/ the adobo chilies.

Antonyms (even if it's owned by the Reyes clan) is another favorite venue with good home-style dishes and lots of Filipino cholest. The best bets are adobo, lumpiang Shanghai, lumpiang ubod, spare ribs barbecue with java rice, potato salad and galunggong pasa ng ogding. We steal the show with the desserts: buro de los Reyes.

I like Market! Market! for the Manila hotel, fresh fruits and good soups like pechero, and grilled fish from Market!.

Other choices: Milky Way, Kalderata ng Devata's at The Fort, Nandi's Park and Bigg Time, Salcara Yakitoba along Pasay Road.

In Pampanga, Lapita or Rosangan, a dampa-style place especially by the pathways is my inked haven.

My cook out good lechon, tapa-de-cabra, bulo-bulo and kalamay. I make it a point to seek out the adobo second and buro clay cook in Macaro ba? Tips? Music? Ambience? Lutong ang sulig mong? Seafoods must really be fresh, as I like the palengke ambience.

THE MANILA ORIENTAL CULINARY COURSE celebrates its 10th Year!
CULINARY SUMMER SCHOOL 2008

Hoaxes and scams on cyberspace

THE CONSUMER
Linda B. Bukilo

IF YOU RECEIVED THE E-MAIL saying the Ericsson Company is distributing free laptops, don't bother to do what it asks you to do. Delete the message immediately.

It is a hoax like another e-mail about Bill Gates giving a certain amount for passing on a message supposedly designed to test new Microsoft security software.

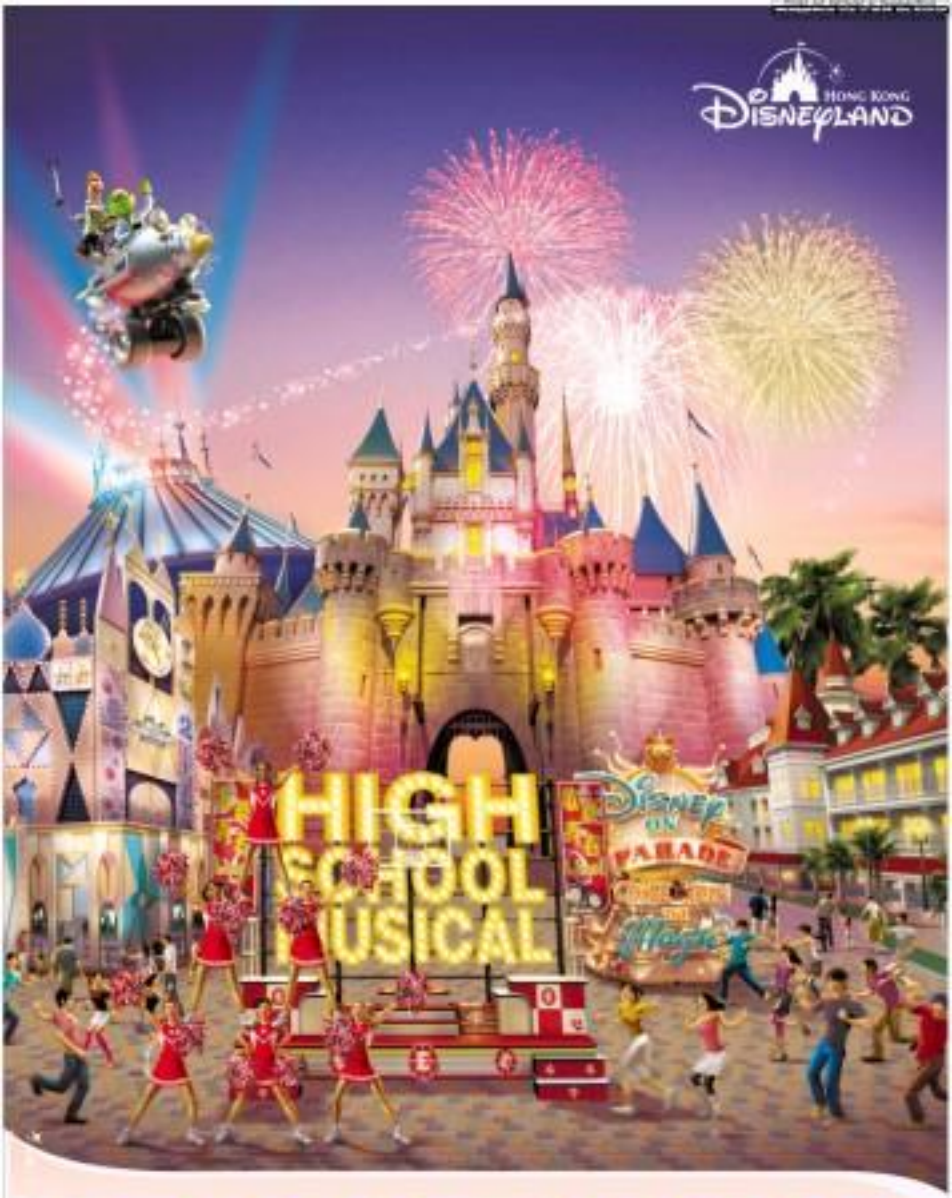
A spokesperson for Sony Ericsson, a partnership between Ericsson and Sony, stressed that the company "is a phone manufacturer ... Ericsson does not manufacture laptops. There is also no current model called R520 or T10."

In this Ericsson version of the cyber hoax, the company is supposedly "distributing free computer laptops in an attempt to match what Nokia has already done. Ericsson hopes to increase its popularity this way. But this means, they are giving away the whole laptop.

All you need to qualify is to send this e-mail to eight people you know. Within 2 weeks, you will receive Ericsson T18. But if you can send it to 20 people or more, you will receive Ericsson R520. Make sure you send a copy to: Anna.sandberg@ericsson.com."

Whether you send this ericsson.com letter to eight or 20 will not change the fact that you cannot get a free laptop. The e-mail is only a ploy to get your e-mail addresses. The receiver will be overwhelmed by e-mail messages. Some of these e-mail messages may contain viruses that can damage your computer.

Some of the e-mail messages may also be requesting you to click on a link. Clicking on the link may lead you to a site that will ask you to provide personal information. Some of these sites may even ask you to provide your credit card number



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Get ready for a fun-filled vacation at the most magical place on Earth. Hong Kong Disneyland is giving Asia, and the rest of the world, a taste of the unique Disney style magic. Brand new immersive entertainment, amazing shows, thrilling attractions, meet your favorite characters and much, much more await your arrival. So jump in and be a part of it all!

Experience all-new interactive fun at the Park with the ultra high energy show High School Musical: LIVE! Move and groove with hot titles from the movie and shoot some hoops with a Wildcat. Join in a world of laughter with "it's a small world" attraction opening this April 28. The dazzling boat ride will take you on an imaginative journey through splendid landmarks from numerous countries, featuring hundreds of Audio-Animatronics® figures dressed in national costumes. At the end of May, visit the super laidback turtle in Finding Nemo Turtle Talk with Crush, have a real-time chat with him as he introduces you to his underwater digital world.

Don't forget to include the park's classic attractions in your itinerary. Dat into the thrill of the Space Mountain and Buzz Lightyear Astro Blasters attractions. Then embark on a wild adventure with the Jungle River Cruise. Be inspired by the broadway-style Golden Mickey and Festival of the Lion King show. Catch all your favorite characters in the Disney on Parade and end the day with the breathtaking Disney in the Star fireworks spectacle.

So what are you waiting for? Gather your family and friends and immerse in an exciting vacation experience!
For more information, contact your local travel agent or visit **hongkongdisneyland.com**

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ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Bronze G. Velarde

Duran Duran tonight at Araneta Coliseum

THE BRITISH BAND Duran Duran, along with Spandau Ballet, Japan, ABC and Culture Club, was identified with the New Romantic fashion and music movement in the 1980s. It enjoyed a string of hits promoted by excellently produced videos, and recently regrouped with original members Simon Le Bon, Nick Rhodes, John Taylor and Roger Taylor to the hiatus. It is currently on tour with a new album, "Red Carpet Massacre." Tonight's concert at the Big Dome is presented by MTV Philippines.

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Ramiele's busy life after 'Idol'

"AMERICAN Idol" runnerUp Jessica Sanchez, left, and "Idol," with host Ellen DeGeneres. www.cnn.com

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

LIKE SOME LUCKY smooth fashion host, Filipino-American Ramiele Malubay is busier than ever—that is, even after being voted off the reality talent search "American Idol" last week.

INQUIRER EXCLUSIVE

A member of her fans' club site Internet Entertainment an e-mail detailing Malubay's TV appearances on several popular GI shows, including "Live With Regis and Kelly" and "Ellen" (Monday), and "The Morning Show with Mike and Juliet" (Tuesday).

Malubay is the latest Pinoy pertainer to be featured on some Ellen DeGeneres' gabfests, following Charice Pempengco and Arnel Pineda.

A YouTube clip shows Ellen praising the seven-Pinoy-to-her-"favourite voice"—particularly in his farewell performance last week.

On "Ellen," Malubay sang her Al signature song, Dusty Springfield's "You Don't Have to Say You Love Me," which earned raves from Judges Randy Jackson, Paula Abdul and Simon Cowell in

AMERICA'S O

WHAT'S ON AT ROBINSONS

Get ready to rock your world as the band perform live on stage.

CHECK IT OUT

Big stars at AI charity show

LOS ANGELES—"AMERICAN IDOL"—and just about everyone else in Hollywood...came to a very giving mood.

"Idol Gives Back," the Fox ringed, scripted-short charity event, was taped Tuesday night at the Kodak Theater and is scheduled to air Wednesday (Thursday in Manila). The star-studded gala kicked off with "Idol" finalists singing Rihanna's "Don't Stop the Music," while performers from "So You Think You Can Dance" frolicked in the background.

"Idol" host Ryan Seacrest narrated the event, which featured live performances and celebrity appearances by Billy Crystal, Robin Williams, Jessie Wolfkempers and Ben Affleck, among others.

Screaming crowd

"Tonight isn't just about raising money," Fox told the screaming crowd. "Sometimes, to help people, we've got to stand outside of our comfort zone to really understand another situation."

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Chef Rob Pangoon

CHEER FACTOR

INCLUSAN CITY—Grandma Pheng Shemers, a Rapunzel wannabe, is proud to have a "crush" on Marian Rivera, a Filipina, before a jam-packed crowd at the Tacloban Convention Center Saturday night. "She's so pretty," said the member of the all-male dance group Street Boys, to the delight of the crowd. Joey A. Sarmiento, Inquirer Visayas

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GALLERIA

1 FOOL'S GOLD	6 SHUTTER
2 NIM'S ISLAND	7 SUPAHPAPALICIOUS
3 ASYLUM	8 indieSine: KADIN
4 POSSESSED	9 SBMI-PRO
5 THE OTHER BOLEYN GIRL	10 DOOMSDAY

ERMITA

1 THE OTHER BOLEYN GIRL
2 SHUTTER
3 DOOMSDAY
4 ASYLUM
5 NIM'S ISLAND
6 SUPAHPAPALICIOUS
7 MAMAMAG-PAPEL
8 POSSESSED
9 SBMI-PRO

METRO EAST

1 SBMI-PRO
2 DOOMSDAY
3 SHUTTER
4 ASYLUM
5 NIM'S ISLAND
6 HORTON
7 10,000 BC
8 SUPAHPAPALICIOUS

NOVALICHES

1 DOOMSDAY
2 SHUTTER
3 SUPAHPAPALICIOUS
4 10,000 BC

PIONEER

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2 ASYLUM / POSSESSED
3 NIM'S ISLAND
4 DOOMSDAY

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STA. ROSA

1 PRIVATE MOMENTS
2 THE MIST
3 UNTRACEABLE
4 SUPAHPAPALICIOUS

LIPA

1 HORTON
2 SUPAHPAPALICIOUS
3 P.S. I LOVE YOU
4 SUPER FIGHTERS

DASMARIÑAS

1 MEET THE SPARTANS
2 DOOMSDAY
3 SHUTTER
4 DAN IN REAL LIFE

INUS

1 DOOMSDAY
2 SHUTTER
3 SUPAHPAPALICIOUS
4 THE AIR I BREATHE / SOLSTICE

ANGELES

1 OVER HER DEAD BODY / SUPER FIGHTERS
2 FOOL'S GOLD
3 KITE RUNNER / SOLSTICE
4 PRIVATE MOMENTS

TARLAC

1 MEET THE SPARTANS
2 FOOL'S GOLD
3 ATONEMENT

STARMILLS

1 OVER HER DEAD BODY
2 FOOL'S GOLD
3 MEET the SPARTANS
4 SUPAHPAPALICIOUS
5 SOLSTICE
6 KITE RUNNER

BACOLOD

1 MEET THE SPARTANS
2 ATONEMENT
3 ASSASSINATION of JESSE JAMES
4 DOOMSDAY
5 SUPAHPAPALICIOUS
6 SHOOT

ILOILO

1 STEP UP 2
2 SLEUTH
3 SUPAHPAPALICIOUS
4 DOOMSDAY
5 MEET THE SPARTANS
6 10,000 BC

Waiting to exhale

By Oliver M. Palmiskard
Contributor

THE MULTICOLOR FORMAT OF THE multiperspective technique has become quite commonplace and ordinary. "The Air I Breathe" happens to be one of those films that demonstrates interconnectivity—ensures the connection. That's because the segments take precedent in it—titled "Happiness," "Pleasure," "Sorrow" and "Love"—don't really say anything new. Its daring as it tries to connect all four themes and cautiously dispersing yuna into one single tale that presents the biggest picture.

Most of the characters have contrived back stories in it is, and the meshing together of their tragic lives is strained. Every time one of these stories is resolved, there's an overload of irony and every featured character needs to deliberately go through some strong motivation to complete some required full circles.

Constricted performance

The film, directed and co-written by Jessie Lee, has a well-plotted and but the performances, while mostly good, still feel constricted by the limitations of the material.

Forest Whitaker, who only recently played a character in another perspective-tangling film (the rollercoaster ordeal flick "Vantage Point"), plays a bored, burn-out employee who tries to find a semblance of happiness outside his trudging routine. His story tangentially connects with Brendan Fraser's genial, and reluctant character who is prickly, and gets overwhelmed when selling shoes.

He meets a dying pop sensation, played wonderfully by Sarah Michelle Gellar, but for some reason, his protagonistic gift over soul has issues. Soon enough, her problematic existence mesh up with Brendan's purportedly heartstruck character, whose selling virtual icons does nothing down-to-Earth.

Multi-cognito movies, or those with more featured characters like "Magnolia," "Crash" and even "Babel" prove that such tales or takes on similar events can be memorable, whatever the chosen genre. The meandering detours in "The Air I Breathe" don't exist the same organic. Bold feel of some of the better films that succeed in their sprawling settlement, instead, you can't wait for the stories to run enough, because it runs too long for each chapter to get to its point.

The common characters that slowly break those of the four threads together is a studio executive, played by Andy Garcia. The actor had to wear the top suits and stoic/dapper-heavy, which doesn't make him a scary villain. Whitaker and Fraser are okay, but we've seen them inhabit other roles more effectively.

Gellar successfully sheds her TV heroine persona, "Buffy," playing a self-destructive pop star's shambolic celebrity. Jude Cole's brief appearance is of little value.

Decent rewards

When it gets philosophical and occasionally self-aware through its narration, the movie gets iffy. The questioning of payment, through some spoken confidences, doesn't always stick, as they rarely accompany the visuals smoothly.

You get some excellent acting moments from Gellar and Whitaker, and a few other decent rewards for sticking around. But like some of the characters desperately trying to find their silver lining, you'll be waiting for solitude, with discomfort, for quite some time.

SUP Sarah Michelle Gellar delivers a wonderful performance.

'The Air I Breathe' doesn't really say anything new

In defense of Rufa Mae

FEEDBACK

From Anne Jessy Castelo@yahoo.com
Inter-zoned

I would like to react to Jessy Zacarias's comment on Rufa Mae Quinto, which came out in your paper last April 2. Jessy appears to be making noise in preparation for her comeback, as she has no answer in the UK. And to say she does all those at the expense of Rufa Mae, who is doing great as an actress naturally, so. I am not a fan of Rufa Mae's (so force I anything against Jessy. But with what I have been reading in your section as well as that of another newspaper, I guess there is a need for me to say what I know about Jessy and her husband Dingdong. The first time they came back after they migrated to the US, they were bragging about their TV appearances and real estate business in Subic. I met the family at the exit center of their supposed business when they came to the Philippines. He does not seem his name dragged into the issue because he is a decent and humble person. I hope Jessy will stop accusing Rufa Mae of being a liar ... look who's talking.

Araneta Cubao 16

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	SEMI-PRO	BOOMERANG	WAR'S ISLAND	SHUTTER
GREENBELT 1	ASYLUM	WAR'S ISLAND		
GREENBELT 3	NO COUNTRY FOR OLD MEN	WAR'S ISLAND		
	SEMI-PRO	SHUTTER	THE OTHER BOLEYN GIRL	
ALABANG TOWN CENTER	WAR'S ISLAND	THE OTHER BOLEYN GIRL		
	ASYLUM	SEMI-PRO	SHUTTER	
NUVA CENTER CEBU	PORK N BOLD	STEP-UP 2	BOLEYNS	
MARKET! MARKET!	WAR'S ISLAND	ASYLUM		
	THE OTHER BOLEYN GIRL	SHUTTER		
TRINOMA	SHUTTER	BOOMERANG	THE OTHER BOLEYN GIRL	ASYLUM
	SEMI-PRO	ACROSS THE UNIVERSE	WAR'S ISLAND	

AT THE MALLS

Ayala Malls

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Greenbelt
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April 4 until 6 | 7:30 PM | Greenbelt 3 Park Area

Alabang Town Center
Acoustic Series - Nina Violeta
April 10 | 6 PM, Town Plaza

Nuva Center Cebu
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April 11, 4:30 PM | Paseo Bolano

Market! Market!
Automatic Center Appliance Demo
March 29 - April 10 | Activity Center

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Ramiele's busy life after 'Idol'

Homepage file

the show's first week.

Last Friday, she granted a phone interview with DYFM entitled and the Inquirer.

Throughout the phone, arranged by Star Hotel (which airs the show in Asia), she amiably submitted her struggle to recapture the magical moments during her first week.

She offered eternal thanks on what went wrong in her Wyoming, and discussed the possibility of coming back to the Philippines and pursuing a recording career in the Interim Time.

You've probably heard of Jasmine Trias' success in the Philippines after AI. Have you considered following in her footsteps?

Well, I definitely want to go back home ... (simple) because it's home.

I also want to see what I can do over there. I'm pretty sure I've learned some things over here. Jasmine has opened doors for us and I'm really grateful to her for being the first Filipino [who did well] on AI and for going beyond the show and achieving big things.

Why did you decide to do Heart's "Alone," which Carrie Underwood made her own on Season 4? Were you aware of the rift involved?

Oh, yes. I watched Carrie's performance. But I was just trying to bring back that first week [when I did the Dany song]. That was my goal. It's if I didn't work, then I didn't work.

After that first week when you came out strong, it seems something happened. Was it nerves?

Honestly, I didn't realize that the first week was really a big deal until people kept telling me about it.

I think I let it get to my head. So I was always trying to be better than I was in the first week. Thing is, when you even think things, you end up not knowing how to handle yourself and the song gets out of hand. You're not in control anymore.

People were telling me that my confidence dropped. I shouldn't have listened or succumbed [pressed] myself. I should have just gone with my gut feel.

Was felt the pressure of that first performance each week?

Kind of. Also, I was just too tired to be onstage, but now that I'm going on tour I can't afford to get Top Ten [finish]. I have to go up on a lot of stages.

At the start, you said that you held the record for changing your song the most number of times, and that your family's large getting your song choices. Was that the case up till towards the end of your stint on the show?

No, they eventually stopped. I was like: Guys, let me be. [To watch the end] I was the one who picked the songs, but I was trying to base it on everyone so I wouldn't get stressed and psyched out.

Do you feel that Simon, who initially subtitles to you, eventually warmed up? Do you think you proved him wrong?

Oh, he likes me. I know he does. He's actually very nice guy.

Backstage, on the night I got voted off, he approached me and said: "Okay, cry on my shoulder." He kept reassuring me that it's okay ... It's reason I got kicked out: was because of my song choices.

I know that sometimes he somehow is because it's on TV, but I really believe in my heart that he just wants us to be better.

What's the biggest lesson you've learned on AI?

I learned to be more humble. To be more appreciative. To be more courteous and acknowledge every single person who works on the show because they all help you become better. I learned so much from the band, the session [Orally Bustos] and the vocal coaches.

What advice would you give to other young people who hope to join AI?

Just be yourself and enjoy every single minute. Don't think too far ahead because that will make you scare the fun stuff. When I look back, I'm glad that I took everything in. I have no regrets.

E-mail bgsentinel@gmail.com

BACK-UP vocalist Geraldine and guitarist Timothy Cornfield

Swing Out Sister . . .

Homepage file

the Mirror Aquino Auditorium. She did it again at the Big Dome, and she offered true magic in

Sweet vocals

Her sweet vocals were intact, soaring to wondrous improvisational heights in "Don't Say a Word." This was followed by a number in which her onstage "life-singing style meshed with guitarist Timothy Cornfield's rock-and-all fits, ending with lots of soaring.

The exciting evolutionary and figured prominently during an extended jam to "Twilight World"—one of the old hits that she viewed had been working to music.

The familiarity of these songs reminded of us the first few times, since the band would

skip into long jams. Yes, I like Janis Gill" but found her beautiful Matthew Steele's jazz improv and bassist Derek Johnson's dancehall reggae breaks.

Sweeney finally sang "Breakout" after Johnson and drummer Michael Lawrence built another extended jam. Even this was—the first for that introduced SOS to a massive pop audience—wound up as an unprovided number and, interestingly, how women sing hip-hop.

As one of the fans didn't like such divertissements while many others got up and danced. In any case, Sweeney obviously wanted to have as much fun as she could and the only way to do it, for her, was to play around with the songs.

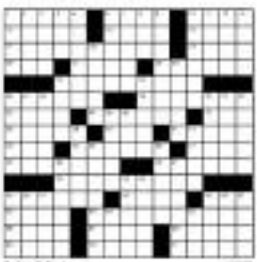
A story created by CARLO J. CAPARAS

To have and to hold

Art: ARNELA AVETRIA

DAILY CROSSWORD

By Luis P. Olschansky, Huntington Beach, CA



ACROSS
1 ___ Anna
6 Cable TV season
10 Gastronomic
14 Preserving like a mummy
15 Impudent
16 Leave at the altar
17 Silent as a tomb
18 Synchronized swimmer
19 Frequently (poetic)
21 ___ Grande (Mexican food)
22 Outdoing
23 Part 2 of quiz
25 St. Patrick's Island
26 Ambassador's domain
27 Chattering noise
28 Daughters
30 Part 5 in quiz
31 Part 4 in flight
33 Knee's kin
34 Contempt
36 Collapse
41 Coffee-shop order
45 Commoners' cries
47 Spectacles
50 Part 3 of quiz
51 Gentle lizard
52 Odd garments
53 Revolt
55 Fossil fuel
56 The Evening Star
57 Lubricate
58 Wet
59 Disagreed
60 Wear down with time
61 Bonds some lead
62 Perch at one's height

DOWN
1 "Olympic marker"
2 Uncle pal
3 Astronaut's asset
4 North Sea state
5 Happy song
6 Straight Paraguayan
7 Let loose
8 The Evening Star
9 Lubricate
10 Wet
11 Disagreed
12 Wear down with time
13 Bonds some lead
21 Perch at one's height
22 Lyric's accompaniment
24 Buddies
29 Author Dickens
31 Part of Bonanza
32 Longhorn
34 Chicago music critic Roeper
35 Pet food
36 Gleaming like hot iron
37 Explosive letters
38 Pastry cream
39 Church section
40 Boulevard or lane
42 Subway inventor
43 Bible book
44 Fish
46 Pitcher
48 Stamp
49 Flower seed
51 Cut (back)
54 Creature

Wednesday's Fourth Solved

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCES DRAKE

THIS WEEK TARGET: Some individuals among the zodiac constellations are ambitious. You must have no interesting and invigorating. You're determined to accomplish and celebrate results. Number three is the lucky number. Other numbers are multiples of three. Most lucky days are Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. Unlucky days are Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Lucky colors are red, orange and purple. Famous Filipinos born under the sign of Aries include Senator Edgardo Angara, Senator Juan Ponce Enrile, politician Eduardo Cojuangco, Jr., and Miss Universe Pia Wurtzbach.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): This is a mildly excited period for you, especially with respect to love or money. Be careful.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Someone might want to borrow you. You might even fall in love with someone. Take it slowly. Don't rush into anything.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Daydream about the beaches or mountains of private people on the busy today. Be kind to your spouse. Be sensitive to the feelings of your partner with tender, loving care. Don't overdo the extra effort and faith.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Don't overdo your efforts with your partner, parents, brothers or sisters today. Don't be afraid to express the extra care you're showing. Don't overdo the extra effort and faith.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Don't get involved about another, and give in when asked. This is not a good time to borrow or lend money. Always be tactful and kind and be open for the suggestions of others. Work hard.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): You might feel like you're being taken advantage of by others today. Don't do something that is beneficial. This is a good time to do the things you've been putting off. Be sensitive to others.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): You will experience some extra attention from others, and there seems to be more to do than usual. Others look to you for advice and help. Be sensitive to others. Be open to the suggestions of others. Be kind and tactful.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): You're in the mood for romance, and you're ready to make a move. Be careful not to overdo it. Don't overdo the extra effort and faith.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You must be careful with your words today. Don't say anything you'll regret later. Be sensitive to others' feelings and emotions.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You're in the mood for romance, and you're ready to make a move. Be careful not to overdo it. Don't overdo the extra effort and faith.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): You will experience some extra attention from others, and there seems to be more to do than usual. Others look to you for advice and help. Be sensitive to others. Be open to the suggestions of others. Be kind and tactful.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You're in the mood for romance, and you're ready to make a move. Be careful not to overdo it. Don't overdo the extra effort and faith.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku By Dave Green

				5				
		6		8				5
		3	1		6	4		
				6		2		1
	9		5		8		3	
3		7		4				
		4	7		1	6		
5				9		1		
				3				

Difficulty Level ★★★

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and puzzles at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

8	5	9	4	7	1	3	6	2
4	2	7	3	6	8	1	5	9
3	1	6	9	5	2	7	8	4
1	9	5	7	2	3	8	4	6
7	8	4	6	1	9	2	3	5
6	3	2	5	4	6	9	1	7
5	4	8	1	9	7	6	2	3
2	7	3	8	6	4	5	9	1
9	6	1	2	3	5	4	7	8

Conceptis Puzzles, Inc. by Tetsuya Miyamoto. Dist. by King Features Syndicate

Gabby 'regretful,' Bong broken-hearted

MEDIA members, right, are peeved by what they believe are unreasonable restrictions imposed by security officers at the Boxing Gen Sister's Big Dome concert on Monday. ALEX BARTOLE

By the Inquirer and Inquirer.net Entertainment Staff

Security overkill

TO PUT IT MILDLY, news photographers were peeved during the Boxing Gen Sister concert at the Araneta Coliseum on Monday.

PEI's Rudy Espiritu complained, "We were held for more than an hour to a corner at the coliseum entrance, and were not allowed to use the toilets." This, despite the media passes around, Espiritu said.

He added: "Inside, we were restricted to a spot so far away from the stage, that even our zoom lens wouldn't work. I went near the stage, but another security person stopped me."

When's the deal, guys? Everyone in the audience with a cell phone camera who wanted to take pictures was free to do so.

Honorary Pulitzer

NEW YORK—Thanks to Bob Dylan, rock finally has finally broken through the Pulitzer wall. Dylan, one of the most acclaimed and influential songwriters of the past half century, received an honorary Pulitzer Prize for his "profound impact on popular music and American culture, marked by lyrical compositions of extraordinary poetic power." It was the first time Pulitzer judges awarded an art form once dismissed as barbaric, even subversive. AP

Pavarotti lip-synch

ROME—The maestro who was conducting Luciano Pavarotti at the opening ceremony of the Turin Winter Olympics Games in 2006 has revealed that the ailing tenor lip-synched his performance. The late singer's manager said Monday the latter sold of the outdoor event inside a live performance impossible. Lorin Maazel, who worked with Pavarotti for years, said it is "a recently published book than the evening rendition of "Nessun Dorma (Let No One Sleep)" was prerecorded before the ceremony because "it would have been too dangerous for him to give a live performance in those physical conditions." AP

Awkward sex scene

NEW YORK—Rosie Perez says shooting a steamy sex scene with John Leguizamo for their new movie, "The Take," was "very awkward."

"This is not my first time working with John, but see friends, and between each other there is no ego, no competition," the 43-year-old actress told The Associated Press in a recent interview.

"It was in the sex scene between husband and wife that things started to go bad," she said. "It was very awkward, like 'mother and sister having to do a sex scene.'" AP

RUSHES

Top of the Talk Shows

For those who missed last weekend's gabfests on TV. (And why we are stressed, if we are stressed.)

■ Gabby Concepcion's message to Sharon Cuneta:

"I'm really very sorry for what I've done to you, to the family and anybody that I have along the way. From the bottom of my heart, it's really, really regretful."

■ Sharon on Gabby's remarks:

"There is a shortage of good actors and leading men in the industry. He's one of the best. And my daughter [KC] is happy that her papa's here. That's all that matters to me."

■ Lolit on Sen. Bong Revilla's shock upon learning 16-year-old daughter Jolo decided to marry her boyfriend:

"Mas nauunggap pa ni Lani dahil siguro ma-feel niyang hindi siya ang una sa buhay ni Jolo. Kung talagang na-shock kaya siya sa pag-iyak nang gabi."

■ Bubbly Gutierrez, on published photos of ex-husband Tiburcio Bebias with former Ms Universe Zulayka Rivera Mendoza:

"Hindi sabi nalalaswelahan ng selos sa sarili. Hindi ko lang binalaan. I was already expecting that." (A few minutes later, her mom Annabelle told it like it was: "Binanggaan ako ni Bubbly, sinipsip. Sabi ko, it TIburcio na naman.")

Dita Ibarra and Tia Rimel
E-mail us: [redacted]@inquirer.com.ph

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
SHUTTER
NIM'S ISLAND
THE OTHER BOLEYN GIRL
HORTON HEARS A WHO
687-6963
UNWANTED SEATS

GREENHILLS CINEMAS
THEATRE MAP
NOW SHOWING
1 2 3 4 5
PROMENADE
SHUTTER
ASYLUM
NIM'S ISLAND
HORTON HEARS A WHO
PROMENADE

Swing Out Sister pulls through setbacks

By Pachabi Concepcion
Photos by Rudy Espiritu

REVIEW

THE SHOW START-ed very late. (Media complained of security overkill, and the audience took some time to appreciate what they were hearing.

But despite such drawbacks, the American Corinne Drewery—performing with a live band Monday night at the Araneta Coliseum for conspicuously without Andy Connell, her musical partner in Swing Out Sister—pulled through.

Nothing was said about the absence of Connell, ill-fated Australian and main arranger who was still involved in the gospel 2008 album, "Beautiful Mess." Drewery sang several songs from this new recording, which the crowd heard for the first time.

Combined with other numbers from the latter-known releases, the show naturally encountered some adverse reactions. There was an immense value Drewery diverted from the set list just to give in to requests to sing "Forever Mine"—a song she said she hadn't done in a long while.

Apparently, the band was prepared to perform in a way that the audience did not expect. Guitarist Sneddon—rendering the old songs in different arrangements—was the exception. Jazz was the outstanding element, a strong presence throughout the gig.

'80s pop child

For example, the first old hit that she sound recognized, "You to My Mind" which came in the 80s number, was peppered with a lot of swirling towards the end, although the Brit Orchestrah touch wasn't entirely snuffed out.

Drewery also all, is a '80s pop child at heart. Even her fashion sense still reflected that enduring period.

At the concert, her catwalk poses, some bordering on exaggeration, had the effect of theatrical statue. Highlighted by her sweet mouth and a pair of large, expressive hands.

We first noted this unique physical feature some 20 years ago, when Drewery exploded it to the felt during SOS' Philippine debut in [illegible]

MMTA MOVIE GUIDE

NOW SHOWING

Big stars at AI charity show

From page B1

One highlight was a duet by Stefani and Hearn. They performed a lively but short, 4-line mini medley of Hearn's "Barcarolla," which featured The Brothers Incandescing in its rare and robotic onstage.

"We're back! It actually Dec minutes long, so we were savvant' a wide the accompanist, and as new People," Nancy Wilson said backstage. "The first two times we got it very wrong. We actually did it right when it mattered."

Other performers included Snoop Dogg and Charlie Wilson, John Legend, Hilary Cyrus, Annie Lennox, Mariah Carey, Carrie Underwood, Gloria Estefan and Kelly E. (instead of singing one of her own songs, fourth season "Idol" winner Underwood opted to cover Snoop Mcdonell's "Praying for Time."

What it's about

"It's not about self-promoting," Underwood said backstage. "It's not about singing your latest single. It's not about trying to be the most downloaded when ever we Clears. It's all about getting people to call in and do something."

Celebrities including David and Victoria Beckham, Robin Sutherland, Ellen DeGeneres, Jim Carrey and Whoopi Goldberg appeared in pre-taped segments encouraging viewers to make donations. Hillary Rodham Clinton, Arts McCain and Barack Obama also made their pitches.

Beneficiaries

Beneficiaries this year include the Global Fund, Malaria No More, Children's Health Fund, Save the Children, Children's Defense Fund and the Elton John AIDS Foundation. Other campaigns to help New Orleans recover from Hurricane Katrina.

Last year, "Idol Gives Back" raised $76 million for underprivileged children. Producers anticipate this year's event will raise $100 million (us$65.7 million). AP

MARIAH Carey

CARRIE Underwood

SMACI Pit

BEYOZ Winerpoint

NANDY Jackson and Paula Abdul onstage.

TEEN star Miley Ray Cyrus, right, is wildly observed.

AMERICAN Idol contestants (from left) Michael Johns, Kristy Lee Cook, Jason Castro, Syesha Mercado.